

THE
INVESTIGATORS
in
THE MYSTERY OF THE
SYMPHONY OF TERROR





in

**THE MYSTERY
OF THE
SYMPHONY OF TERROR**

Movie director Raymondo Kappelhoff collapses in pain while attending a rehearsal of an orchestra known as 'The Colourphonics'. He then hires The Three Investigators to find out about the orchestra's unique music which he describes as 'terrifying' and 'demonic'. To do that, Jupiter, Pete and Bob have to experience the music themselves. However, there is not much time before the orchestra next performs their 'terrifying' music in front of a large audience... incidentally at a very familiar venue—Terror Castle!

The Three Investigators
in
The Mystery of the Symphony of Terror

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(The Three ???: Symphony of Fear)

by

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1. The Barrel Organs

“My goodness, Titus! Are you out of your senses?” Aunt Mathilda was standing in the driveway of The Jones Salvage Yard. She looked as if she was about to chase her husband out of the yard along with his latest purchases.

Uncle Titus slumped a little in the driver’s seat of his pick-up truck. “It was an offer I couldn’t resist!”

“You can’t resist any offer,” Mathilda said briskly. “It’s always the same old story! We’ll have to get rid of these things quickly.”

She looked around with her dreaded eagle eye. Less than two seconds later, she had spotted Jupiter and his two friends, who had been watching the pick-up and its load from a safe distance. Before they could even think of taking refuge in their secret hiding place, they were beckoned by Mrs Jones.

“We’re going to need the pick-up later today, so you’ll have to unload the junk right now,” she said sternly. “There’s some room behind the garden tools and the car parts. Please line everything up neatly!”

Jupiter peered curiously over at his uncle, who was now parking the pick-up. There were obviously some box-like items at the back of the truck, but from afar, he could not make out what they were.

“People want chairs and beds, tools or flower pots,” Aunt Mathilda said to her husband. “They need car parts, a cheap garden hose or pretty china, but nobody needs old barrel organs!”

“You’re wrong, Mathilda!” Uncle Titus jumped out of the car a little stiff-legged. “Never underestimate the power of music!”

“The power of music?” echoed Aunt Mathilda with a vehement shake of her head.

Uncle Titus ignored the gesture. “Swarms of customers will succumb to the nostalgic sounds of a time long gone.”

“I’m afraid the only one getting nostalgic here is you!” Aunt Mathilda still looked at her husband reproachfully, but now there was a little bit of understanding in her voice.

Titus Jones had played a calliope in a circus as a young man. The memories of that phase of his life were still precious to him today. He had even bought a second-hand organ a few years ago—also to the dismay of his wife—and played old pop songs and sea shanties in the evenings in the yard. The day when a customer had bought it for a really good price had been a dark day for Uncle Titus.

Together with Pete and Bob, Jupiter approached the pick-up. On the cargo area were nine barrel organs. Some of them were a bit battered, some of the paint was peeling off, others only had three wheels or were completely covered in cobwebs. On one box sat a battered toy monkey with rusty cymbals in its paws.

“Jupe, I bet your uncle will try them all out later!” Pete predicted as he looked at the load.

Bob smiled. “What does your uncle see in these old things?”

“His heart is almost as much in music as in curios and special antiques,” Jupiter explained to his friend. Behind him he heard a clearing of the throat. He turned quickly and saw Aunt Mathilda, who was now standing right next to the pick-up.

"If your uncle's heart is really so attached to music, he could have given me tickets to the opera for our last wedding anniversary. Instead, I got an old miner's lamp!"

"You always complained that it was too dark in the basement!" Uncle Titus defended himself. "The lamp is a historical original from a European mine—a real museum piece!"

Aunt Mathilda waved it off energetically. "New, contemporary basement lighting would have done the trick. Apart from that, I mentioned several times in the weeks before our wedding anniversary that I would like to go to a concert or the opera again—and not here in Rocky Beach but some fancy place in Los Angeles!"

"I think we'll unload the stuff!" Jupiter quickly announced before his uncle and aunt could start a real argument. "Will you tell us where these barrel organs should go, Aunt Mathilda?"

It didn't take long until all the barrel organs had found a good spot away from dirt. There they were, standing side by side under shade, waiting for customers.

Uncle Titus's eyes lit up as he looked at his purchases. "I think we should start a music corner here. It's always better to sort the items thematically. There should be a box of triangles and a xylophone somewhere... and the other day I bought a collection of igneous rocks at a household clearance."

When The Three Investigators looked at him questioningly, he shrugged. "Those things belonged to a musicologist from San Francisco. So I suppose they have something to do with music."

"Shall we help you with the music corner?" asked Jupiter.

Uncle Titus hesitated. "I'd better discuss this idea with your aunt. We don't want any trouble in the end. You can call it a day as far as I am concerned. Thank you very much for your help."

The Three Investigators left Titus Jones with his latest acquisitions and strolled across the square between stacks of rusty steel tubes, a pile of antique bird cages, a collection of old galvanized iron buckets and a few weathered Hollywood swings.

"Hopefully they can come to an agreement," Bob said when Jupiter's uncle was out of earshot.

"They have made up every time," said the First Investigator confidently. "Aunt Mathilda can be vehemently assertive, but she also has a big heart. She had never been angry with my uncle for long."

"That's good, then," Pete said. "Maybe we should finally turn our attention to our new case."

His two friends looked at him in confusion.

"What new case?" Jupe asked.

Pete grinned. "Yes, you're always hoping for a new case, aren't you? There is one, though. It's a case which has been lying around for days and which is slowly but surely driving our client up the wall."

"That we have a pending case is completely beyond my knowledge!" Jupiter looked at the Second Investigator in a scrutinizing manner. In his head, he hurriedly went through all the possible cases they had worked on recently but all of them had been completed entirely to their satisfaction. They had not received any new assignment for weeks.

"We have already seen the client in a rage today," Pete explained.

Jupiter frowned. "You mean—"

"Yes, 'The Mystery of the Unpainted Fence'!" Pete beat him to it.

Now Bob also began to understand what his friends were talking about. "That's right, Aunt Mathilda asked us to paint the inside of the salvage yard fence."

Pete nodded. “Yes, and that’s what we’re going to do now. The paint and brushes are already in the outdoor workshop, so we can get started right away.”

“Maybe your aunt will reward us with her cherry pie,” Bob said hopefully, “or she’ll make those delicious chocolate biscuits again.”

Jupiter didn’t look very enthusiastic. “The outside of the fence was designed by local artists. It would be obvious to put the inside in talented hands now, wouldn’t it?”

Bob couldn’t help laughing. “Why don’t you admit that you don’t feel like doing that kind of manual work? You’d rather let your grey cells work.”

“That’s right,” confirmed the First Investigator. “I could use my innate skills better on a real case than on the colourful redesign of a fence!”

Before Bob and Pete could answer anything, a man came straight towards them. He swayed slightly, as if he were drunk or on board a ship in rough seas. His pale skin, which had a slightly greenish tinge, also matched this.

Jupiter eyed the man from top to bottom. He had a kind of hairstyle that seemed strange—especially since the light brown hair was cut short at the top of his head but was so long at the nape of his neck that it fell to his shoulders. His clothes were no less striking—light blue skinny jeans, a short jacket and a turquoise T-shirt with colourful sunglasses printed on it. The man looked as if he had stepped out of a pop music video from the eighties.

“You... uh... is this ‘The Jones Junkyard’?” he stammered breathlessly. With a jerky movement, he wiped his forehead.

Jupiter estimated the man to be in his mid-forties, maybe even older. What was certain was that he was not well. Maybe he was just a drunken customer, but he definitely aroused the curiosity of the First Investigator.

“Salvage yard,” he corrected the man. “This is The Jones Salvage Yard. Are you interested in anything particular, sir?”

The man held on to a chest of drawers as if he might topple over at any moment. “No... that is, yes... I... I am looking for The Three Investigators.”

Jupiter was happy to hear that. He already sensed a new case. The lack of excitement had lasted far too long. “You’re absolutely at the right place—we are The Three Investigators.”

“What?” Now the strangely dressed man looked even more confused than before. “You are those investigators? It can’t be! You’re much too young.”

The Three Investigators exchanged a quick glance. Then Jupiter pulled the business card of their investigation agency out of his pocket and handed it to the man. The card said:



The man with the old-fashioned hairstyle studied the card for quite a while—much longer than people usually did. Pete was already getting impatient when the man finally looked up.

“Please, sir, can we help you further?” asked Jupiter.

The man did not answer. Instead, he grabbed his forehead. His face looked distorted with pain for a moment.

Now Jupiter was honestly concerned. “Sir? Can you hear me?”

“The music...” the man murmured. “It was horrible! It was under my skin... it was in my blood... it... in fact, it terrified me!”

2. Demonic Music

“Have a seat!” Bob said. The Three Investigators had led the strange man to their outdoor workshop and unfolded a garden chair there.

The man sank down onto the chair, exhausted. “Please excuse my appearance... I... I haven’t even introduced myself... My name is Raymondo Kappelhoff. I’m still all mixed up... since this morning...”

Jupiter pinched his lower lip. The name sounded familiar but he was sure he had never seen this man before.

“Mr Kappelhoff,” Bob said quietly. “Now, calm down first. Would you like a glass of water?”

“Yes, thank you. That would be good!”

“I’ll be right back!” Bob hurried to the yard office. Jupiter and Pete stayed with Mr Kappelhoff, who finally seemed a little more relaxed.

“I had thought you were real adult investigators—a competent team that could help me,” he confessed. When he saw Jupiter’s look, he added apologetically: “After the shock this morning, I don’t handle surprises well.”

“We have solved many cases that have baffled adult investigators!” reported Pete proudly. “We also work very closely with the Rocky Beach Police Department.”

Before he could tell what The Three Investigators had already achieved, Bob returned with a glass of water. He handed it to Kappelhoff, who immediately took a deep sip.

“Thank you, my boy.” The man forced himself to smile.

“What exactly happened to you today?” asked Jupiter after Kappelhoff had taken a second sip.

“Well, I’m afraid you won’t believe me. It all seems like a dream myself—a nightmare, to be exact.”

“Just tell us calmly from the beginning,” Jupe urged.

“I went to a rehearsal today at the Villa of the Arts in Hollywood. Have you heard of The Colourphonics?”

Pete immediately glanced at Bob who was particularly knowledgeable about art and music, but the name seemed to mean nothing to him.

“The Colourphonics are a very unusual orchestra,” Kappelhoff explained. “They’ve only been around for a few years. At the moment, they are only known among enthusiasts, but I’m sure they could make it big in Hollywood.”

“What’s so special about them?” Pete asked.

“They just make totally extreme sounds.” Kappelhoff suddenly seemed changed. His face took on an excited expression. “They use unusual instruments and play pieces that don’t seem to come from this planet. I don’t know how to describe it exactly but... they seem to be the spherical sounds of an alien dimension—a medial and at the same time apocalyptic symphony. They are extraordinary, excessive and gloriously eccentric!”

Pete suppressed a sigh. He didn’t like it when people expressed themselves in such a stilted way. With someone like Jupiter, Pete would certainly have dropped a remark, but he didn’t want to make the stricken Mr Kappelhoff feel even more insecure.

“What kind of instruments exactly?” Bob asked with genuine interest.

“Special instruments.”

“In what way?”

“I’m not familiar with them, but I can tell that they are electronic instruments, not normal violins or trumpets.” Mr Kappelhoff thought for a moment. “—And the musicians themselves are also anything but ordinary. Anyone who wants to play with The Colourphonics must not only have perfect pitch, but must also be prepared in other ways to understand music more than just acoustically.” He made a sweeping gesture with his hand, almost knocking a radio off the workbench. “Those who engage with the music of The Colourphonics also experience it visually, tactilely or even olfactorily.”

“That sounds great.” Pete tried hard to sound honest. In truth, he could hardly understand any of Kappelhoff’s descriptions. However, the Second Investigator did not want to give up that quickly. He thought about what had been said. ‘Visually’ meant that one could see something—in this case, apparently, the music. The Second Investigator had a dim suspicion that the words ‘tactilely’ and ‘olfactorily’ also had something to do with sensations.

Fortunately, Jupiter summed up Kappelhoff’s words briefly: “So I gather that this particular kind of music appeals to all human senses—you can hear it, see it, feel it and even smell it.”

The man looked up gratefully at Jupiter. “You’ve got it! That’s exactly the basis of their music.”

“On the one hand, you are not familiar with the instruments, but on the other hand, you seem to have studied this orchestra very intensively,” said the First Investigator thoughtfully. “Am I right in assuming that The Colourphonics are not only of private interest to you?”

Raymondo Kappelhoff nodded eagerly. “You are a good observer! In fact, I don’t work in the music business.”

Suddenly Jupiter knew why the man’s name had sounded familiar. He had read about him! “You’re a movie director in Hollywood!”

“That’s true,” Kappelhoff admitted. “I’m not famous yet, but at least I have a loyal fan base and my next project could be a success.”

“Does the project have anything to do with The Colourphonics?” Bob wanted to know.

“In a way, yes. I’m looking for a suitable ensemble—an orchestra that can perfectly underline the mysterious mood of my next movie.”

“And that’s where you came across The Colourphonics,” Bob surmised.

“That’s exactly how it was. After a few conversations, I finally received an invitation to a rehearsal of their upcoming concert. I was thrilled, because I have been fascinated with The Colourphonics... until now.”

“Until now?” Juve asked. “How is it different now?”

Kappelhoff hesitated briefly. “Well, I am still fascinated... but also worried. It was quite strange. At an official concert six months ago, I experienced only very slight sensations triggered by certain vibrations... very subtle feelings. However, this time it was different. The music was evil! It hurt me, scared me and weakened me physically. It was like making me sick. Then I collapsed.”

“Maybe your problem had nothing to do with the music,” Jupiter suggested.

“Believe me, it was the music! After the encounter this morning, I immediately left the place. While still in the taxi, I called a friend who I felt could be of help.”

“Who is this friend of yours?” Jupiter asked.

“He is a music professor at the Santa Monica Conservatory of Music,” Mr Kappelhoff replied.

“Aha!” Jupiter said. “By any chance, is your friend Mr Sergei Charkov?”

“Yes,” Kappelhoff replied. “As you might already know, he is an expert who has uncanny experiences with music. It was his daughter Jelena who told me about you on the phone and suggested that I use your services. She said you investigate unusual phenomena. That was why I came here.”

“Yes, Mr Kappelhoff,” Jupiter said proudly. “We have solved a very important case for Mr Charkov some time ago, and it involved an unusual phenomenon with a violin.”

At that moment, the first bars of a cheerful melody sounded. Uncle Titus had obviously set about testing the barrel organs. The song *Waltzing Matilda* sounded somewhat off-key to them.

Kappelhoff immediately flinched. His face contorted into a grimace. “Who would have thought that one day I would reach the point where any kind of music would terrify me.”

“I’ll go and see Mr Jones and ask him to continue later,” Pete said sympathetically.

“I’m fine,” Mr Kappelhoff said. “Really!”

“We can say from our own experience that music can certainly have a strong psychological or physical effect,” Jupiter explained in a matter-of-fact manner. “For example, infrasound, which is very particularly low tones, can have an effect on the human nervous system. You feel fear and—”

“I know, I know.” The director waved it off. “It’s all in my new movie too. I’ve already done a lot of research to the extent that I could say that I’ve just become an expert. A few months ago, I even went to an organist in a small church in the mountains and had him play those low notes for me just so I could experience the feeling first-hand.

“However, that in this morning was more than infrasound! If I didn’t know better, I would say that the music was out of this world. It was...” He faltered, then looked desperately at The Three Investigators. “It was demonic!”

3. The Investigation Begins

In the early evening, The Three Investigators gathered in their headquarters—an old mobile home trailer hidden under mountains of scrap metal.

Jupiter had received a jug of lemonade from Aunt Mathilda and placed it on the big old desk. Outside in the yard, Uncle Titus was testing the barrel organs again. That was why they had tightly closed all openings of their trailer including the roof hatch.

“This Kappelhoff struck me as rather strange,” Pete admitted. “I don’t see how we can help him. Apart from that, he desperately needs a hair-styling consultant!”

“Jelena believed him,” Bob pointed out, “and we have experienced first-hand the strange effects music can have.”

“Yes, it is strange,” Pete admitted, “but far from demonic. The music this Kappelhoff guy is talking about obviously has the power to cause someone to have a breakdown. That’s a whole different ball game.”

“Not so different from the infrasound thing either,” Jupe said.

“Not different, but more violent and much scarier!” Pete added.

“If it really was the music, then it seems to trigger in the listeners some kind of epileptic seizure or something similar,” Jupiter reflected.

“—And you want to deal with that?” Pete asked.

Jupiter sat down on his swivel chair. “So far we have always stayed true to our motto that we investigate anything.”

“That’s what you promised Kappelhoff earlier—without consulting us,” Pete remarked in annoyance.

“The man came to us specifically because he didn’t know what else to do,” Jupiter justified himself. “I couldn’t very well tell him that we were making an exception in his case and that we thought he was crazy. Apart from that, I don’t think he’s crazy at all until otherwise proven.”

“Fine,” Pete replied, but was not entirely convinced. “Then we’ll go to those Colourphonics, prove that they terrify their audience with infrasound, and put them all behind bars.”

“A good investigator should work out theories,” Jupiter lectured, “but should not fixate on a solution in advance. That sometimes obscures the view of the facts.”

The First Investigator pulled a pad and pencil towards him and jotted down a few keywords. “Mr Kappelhoff has told us of anxiety, headaches, shortness of breath, hot flushes and dizziness to the point of near fainting. According to him, however, The Colourphonics themselves did not react to the music. There were no other audience members at the rehearsal either.”

“So as it is, we do not know anyone else who has had similar experiences,” Bob concluded, “nor are there any witnesses, except The Colourphonics themselves.”

“Very true,” the First Investigator agreed. “Nevertheless, the question is whether Mr Kappelhoff was the intended target of the music, or whether his collapse was merely a coincidence.”

“Maybe he just has a vivid imagination,” Pete interjected, “and then he calls it demonic music!”

“That may be, Pete,” Jupiter replied, “but we’ll just assume for now that he felt something during the rehearsal.”

Bob played with an eraser, lost in thought. “So we have to find out what Kappelhoff, of all people, was terrified about. He wants to offer The Colourphonics to do the soundtrack to his new movie. That’s more of a reason to treat him as well as possible.”

Jupiter nodded curtly and made a note on his pad. “It is not yet clear who or what terrified him.”

“Well, The Colourphonics,” said Pete.

“That is Kappelhoff’s suspicion, Pete, and it is also quite obvious... but that does not necessarily mean that it is the case.”

“No?”

“While our client was at a rehearsal of the Colourphonics at the time of his collapse, it is possible that the musicians had nothing to do with it.”

Pete looked at his friend sceptically. “Who else could it have been? The cleaning lady?”

“Possibly,” Jupe replied curtly.

The Second Investigator grinned wryly. “She probably used her demonic duster or the mop of horror for that.”

Jupiter put the fingertips of both hands together. “If Kappelhoff is telling the truth, then the musicians are definitely our main suspects. However, there are several of them in an orchestra. It will take time to check them all out.”

“So we have to go on site and verify Kappelhoff’s statement,” Bob said.

“That’s what it looks like.” Jupiter tapped his pencil on the pad. “Bob, the research falls into your area. Find out exactly who The Colourphonics are; what kind of music they make; and what connection there is between them and Kappelhoff. Have they known him for a while? Do they really want to work for him? Do they have a reason to terrify him? What is special about their music? What can we find out about their conductor? And has any of their members possibly committed a crime before?”

“Will do.”

“I would love to listen to a rehearsal like that,” Jupe said.

Pete looked at his friend, startled. “Does it have to be that way?”

“How else are we going to tackle this case?” Jupe replied.

Pete scratched his head. “Sure, but what if Kappelhoff didn’t imagine that stuff with the demonic music after all? Then a rehearsal like that is potentially homicidal!”

Jupiter’s look suddenly revealed an anticipation that Pete definitely could not share. “Then the visit to this ensemble should be an extremely exciting experience.”

“Just wait until the music terrifies you!” the Second Investigator replied, half amused, half serious.

“Anyway...” Bob returned to the previous topic. “—I’m sure I won’t be able to find out much about The Colourphonics in the library here in Rocky Beach. I think I should go to my father’s office tomorrow.”

Bob’s father worked at the *Los Angeles Times*, a large daily newspaper. The newspaper had a perfectly organized and extremely extensive archive that Bob was allowed to use for his research. Sometimes he found information here that was either not available at all on the Internet or not in such detail.

Jupiter seemed to agree. “That fits well. Anyway, I had planned for the three of us to go to Los Angeles tomorrow.”

“Oh, you did?” Pete remarked in annoyance.

“As I said, I would like to visit The Colourphonics. That’s why I asked Mr Kappelhoff to make contact. He has already called me and confirmed an appointment. We are to meet a Lady Eunice Merrywell van Orten tomorrow.”

4. Villa of the Arts

“There it is!” Bob pointed to a large building with a glass front.

The Three Investigators were standing in the middle of Hollywood Heights—a hilly neighbourhood with numerous narrow streets winding up the slopes. To the left and right of the street were the terrace houses of wealthy people. While a hazy haze lay over the centre of Los Angeles, as so often, the air up here was clear, but it was almost unbearably hot. No wonder there were only a few plants apart from cacti.

“Doesn’t really fit here,” Pete thought as he looked up at the building.

It was huge and made up of several distinct parts. The entrance area looked like a modern corporate complex, but further up the slope to the hillside, the building had a glass corridor that led to an old-fashioned extension, which in turn branched out into a narrow concrete wing on the left and several terraces on the right.

“There must have been several architects at work at the same time—and without consulting each other.” Bob stopped in front of a acrylic panel next to a wide double door. On it was written ‘Villa of the Arts’. “So this is where the rehearsal of The Colourphonics took place,” he recalled.

“Well, I can’t wait to see if Mr Kappelhoff told them the right thing!” said Pete. “Not that they already know we’re investigators!”

“We’ll see about that...” Jupiter stretched out his right hand and rang the bell. Instead of a common ring, it chimed the beginning of Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*.

“No surprise here!” Bob grinned.

The door buzzed, then The Three Investigators stepped into an air-conditioned foyer. On the inside, the Villa of the Arts looked modern and noble at the same time.

A young woman with glasses and curly blonde hair sat behind a glass crescent-shaped counter. As The Three Investigators entered, she looked up and smiled. “Are you the students Mr Kappelhoff signed up?”

“Right,” Bob confirmed, returning the smile charmingly. “We’re writing a paper on The Colourphonics for our music class.”

“But isn’t it the school holidays now?”

“Yes, but we still got quite a lot of assignments,” Jupiter said.

Bob nodded affirmatively. “I think our teachers are afraid that we might forget everything we’ve learned during the time off from school.”

“Poor you. Well, I’ll inform Lady Eunice that you’re here.” She reached for the phone, keyed in three numbers and waited a moment.

Meanwhile, the boys looked around attentively. Large modern oil paintings hung on the walls and white stone sculptures stood in the corners. What was particularly unusual, however, were the many small loudspeakers that were embedded in the walls, the ceiling and even the floor. Soft, disjointed sounds rang out from all directions—the short chirp of a bird, a muffled knock, a dulcet harp chord, a low growl, the bleating of a goat, the creaking of a door and many other sounds.

“I can’t believe the woman at the front desk puts up with this all day!” Pete murmured to his two friends.

“Lady Eunice will come and meet you in a moment,” came from the counter.

“Thank you,” Bob said.

Then they waited in silence. A whistle shrilled, a motorbike rattled and an owl called. A sonorous snore sounded and finally the reverberation of high-heeled shoes on stone floors. This sound, however, did not come from one of the loudspeakers.

A tall woman stalked towards The Three Investigators. With an elegant jacket, she wore a matching skirt, dark tights and shoes with spiked heels. A black hat sat on her blonde hair, covering half of her face. She adjusted her huge black sunglasses and nodded curtly to the woman behind the counter.

For a moment, it looked as if she would turn to The Three Investigators, but then she walked clattering past them to the front door. Soon, the door closed behind her.

“I thought she was ‘Merryweather van Cotton’,” Pete said. “She looked like a real lady.”

“I thought the same as well,” Bob admitted.

A car backfiring sounded from the loudspeakers, followed by the tinkling of a music box and the gurgling of a brook. As a distant thunder rumbled, a second woman entered the foyer.

She was neither tall nor particularly smartly dressed. Her small body looked thin in an unhealthy way, almost emaciated. The slightly too large beige trousers and flowered blouse looked as if they had come straight from a discount store. Her hair, dyed red, had a greyish tinge and her mouth wrinkles were so pronounced that she looked much older than she probably was. Jupiter estimated her to be between sixty and seventy years old, with plenty of leeway.

“Welcome to the Villa of the Arts! I am Eunice van Orten,” she greeted the boys in a deep voice that sounded like years of chain-smoking and alcohol consumption. “Raymondo’s friends are my friends too!”

“Thank you very much for taking the time to meet us. By the way, I am—” Jupiter began, but he did not get any further.

The woman interrupted him. “Quiet! Listen to these special acoustics here in the lobby. The whole building is a painting of sounds. Can you feel the sounds weaving themselves into images? Isn’t it great?”

“Yes, quite wonderful.” Pete looked around nervously.

Lady Eunice looked piercingly at The Three Investigators. “Come... Let me show you around the place!”

They followed the little woman into a mirrored lift. “As you may know, this institute was founded by my father. He was a very successful movie producer, but then in his old age, he decided to promote artists of all kinds, especially those who wanted to create something new and unique. Painters, musicians, sculptors, poets, photographers—they are all welcome here.”

The group got out on the first floor. There was a long corridor that led from the modern building directly into the older part on the hillside. The two buildings were connected as if by a covered bridge. The contrast could not have been greater—instead of stone and glass, the old building had mahogany panelling and fluffy, dark carpets. Hardly any sunlight penetrated through the narrow windows. The Three Investigators had the feeling of entering a nobly furnished cave.

“This is our music area,” Lady Eunice explained proudly. “The Colourphonics are in the Green Room, a soundproof room that has been specially converted for their needs.”

“Well, I’m curious about that!” Jupiter admitted.

Lady Eunice shook her head vigorously. “I can’t show you the room. The Colourphonics don’t let anyone in, let alone guests.”

That was not good news for Jupiter. “But Mr Kappelhoff was allowed to be present at the last rehearsal!”

“Mr Kappelhoff is a long-time friend of this institute and he had contacted us well in advance.” Lady Eunice stopped in front of a door. “The Green Room is always locked, partly for security reasons. After all, The Colourphonics have very valuable instruments—some of them even unique pieces made specially for them.”

“Can we not contact the musicians then?” asked Bob disappointedly.

“You could...” Lady Eunice said. “In ten minutes, they will have their daily tea break. Mr Yamada, the leader of the orchestra, is very particular about traditions. His tea is part of it. The other musicians then usually go to the west wing to our sun terraces or to our lounge—the Blue Salon. You can talk to them there.” She continued to show the boys the facilities on that floor.

Soon, The Three Investigators heard the door of the Green Room open and people stepped out into the corridor. The next moment, a young man among the musicians walked hastily towards Lady Eunice.

“I want to complain!” the man burst out.

“Then why don’t you come to my office later this afternoon, Mr Van der Wijk,” Lady Eunice suggested. “I’m giving a tour right now.”

“It can’t wait!” The young man nervously fiddled with both hands a leather cord with a pendant he wore around his neck. “Working with this Yamada is a real ordeal! I’m a freelance artist and I don’t need to be told how to do my work at every opportunity! No one in this place seems to appreciate my art. Whether I will be at the concert is highly questionable at the moment!”

“I guess we can talk for a moment,” Lady Eunice conceded. Then she turned to The Three Investigators and said quietly to them: “Mr Van der Wijk is engaged to provide the colour accompaniment for the next concert of The Colourphonics. He will translate the music into colours and shapes, which in turn will be shown on a large screen. However, there seems to be some problem, so I have to speak to him urgently. I’ll be right back. Just make your way to the Blue Salon. You might be able to talk to some of the members of The Colourphonics.”

Shortly afterwards, Lady Eunice had gone around the next corner with the upset Mr Van der Wijk.

Pete and Bob were about to make their way to the Blue Salon when Jupiter held his friends back. “Wait! I’d love to have a look around the Green Room.”

“It’s secured, isn’t it?” Pete asked.

“That’s why I need you and your lock picks. Bob can talk to the musicians in the meantime.”

The Second Investigator reluctantly agreed and Bob went into the Blue Salon alone.

Soon, Pete and Jupiter stood in front of the closed door. The First Investigator kept an eye on the gloomy corridor while Pete set to work. Although he had already gained some experience with locks of all kinds, the lock of The Colourphonics proved to be a real challenge.

“We don’t have forever!” hissed Jupiter.

Pete groaned. “I can’t do this. It must be some special mechanism!” He tried another lock pick but without success.

“Stop,” Jupiter suddenly commanded. Now Pete heard approaching footsteps.

“This must be the Green Room of The Colourphonics!” the First Investigator now remarked aloud. He talked as if he was having a conversation with Pete. “I hope we find Mr

Van der Wijk's pendant otherwise he will be very disappointed."

"Er, yes. I'm sure," Pete said, looking over Jupiter's shoulder into the corridor.

A girl with bushy hair and freckles was coming straight towards them. She was short and stocky and reminded Jupiter in a strange way of a human strawberry, except that she wasn't wearing leaves on her head, but a wide green silk scarf.

"The room is locked!" she explained in a rough but not unpleasant voice. Now that she was standing right in front of them, they could see that she was very young.

"What a pity," Jupiter said regretfully. "Mr Van der Wijk has lost his pendant—a small bronze disc with a lapis lazuli stone on a thin leather cord. We were asked to look for it."

She took off a colourfully embroidered lanyard she wore around her neck. "I have to go into the Green Room anyway. While I'm there, I might as well look around for the pendant. If I find it, I'll give it back to Mr Van der Wijk."

Jupiter tried to suppress his frustration as best he could. For a moment, he had hoped the girl would let them into the room.

"Who are you guys anyway?" she asked when she had unlocked the door.

"We are friends of Mr Kappelhoff," Jupe said.

The red-haired girl looked worried. "Is he better now?"

"I think so," Jupiter said. "With symptoms like severe anxiety, shortness of breath and sweating, it's not something to joke about. Perhaps he should have gone to a hospital."

"That's what my father told him." The girl stopped indecisively in the doorway. "—But I don't think going to a hospital can help."

"What do you mean?" Jupiter wanted to know.

The girl looked up and down the corridor. She suddenly looked nervous. "Why do you want to know?"

"We want to help Raymondo Kappelhoff."

"So why did you lie about wanting to look for a pendant?"

"Lied?" Jupiter gasped.

"You said you wanted to look for Mr Van der Wijk's pendant," she explained quietly, "but when I saw him a few minutes ago, he was wearing it around his neck. I'm guessing that the search for it was just an excuse to get into this room."

Jupiter was seriously taken aback. Normally it was he who impressed others with his powers of observation and his conclusions. The girl was really clever. He probably wouldn't get anywhere with her with more excuses so he decided to tell the truth. "We want to find out what really happened at the rehearsal."

"I can tell you that."

Jupiter waited... but the girl did not say anything further.

"So?"

"So what?"

"You said you could tell us what happened at the rehearsal."

"That's right." She nodded. "I can, but that doesn't necessarily mean I will."

Jupiter raised an eyebrow. Bob would probably have tried charm, but this method did not suit the First Investigator. He preferred to take the direct route. "We need to know exactly what happened, otherwise we can't help Mr Kappelhoff!"

"The Colourphonics were playing their latest composition," the girl began. "After only a few minutes, the director was suddenly on the floor, twitching. My father took care of him and offered to drive him to a hospital, but Kappelhoff didn't want to."

"Were you there?"

"No, I was in the office working on the programme for the concert."

“You’re doing the programme?” asked Pete, puzzled.

“Why do you ask?”

“You’re still so... young.”

“I’m thirteen.”

“You are very young!”

“Do you always automatically infer a person’s abilities from their age?” She looked at him disapprovingly.

“No, not at all!” Pete defended himself. “Quite the opposite.”

“Let’s get back to the real topic before the break is over.” Jupiter glanced briefly at his watch. “So your father is one of The Colourphonics?”

“Yes, he plays the laser harp.”

“I have heard of the instrument,” said the First Investigator. “It projects out several laser beams, each associated with a particular musical note. When the musician blocks a beam, the instrument produces the corresponding tone, reminiscent of a harp.”

“That’s one way of describing it,” the girl replied.

“Anyway, it looks spectacular.”

“Mr Kappelhoff thought so too.”

“Do you know him well?” asked Pete.

She shook her head. “Not really. He’s very interested in The Colourphonics and was here a few times because he supports this sort of electronic music. I’ve only spoken to him briefly a couple of times.”

“Yet you looked worried when I first mentioned him,” Jupe commented.

“Of course, I’m worried! He collapsed during rehearsal and that makes him the second person to be terrified by the music!” The girl was about to say more when two men and a woman turned the corner.

“Meet me at five at Broken Dreams, the little café down the street,” she murmured to the two investigators. “We’ll talk then.”

Without giving Jupiter and Pete another look, she went into the Green Room.

5. The Colours of Music

When his friends joined him in the Blue Salon, Bob didn't look too pleased. The Colourphonics had not given him any information worth mentioning. Some had even refused to speak to him at all. It was like dealing with a secret organization. Now the musicians were standing around in small groups, drinking tea or coffee and talking quietly—so quietly that they could hardly be heard.

The Three Investigators went out to one of the terraces to talk between themselves.

"There are so many suspects, I don't even know where to start!" Bob groaned.

"Well, we should focus our attention on two people in particular," Jupe said. "Yamada and Van der Wijk. One is the leader of The Colourphonics and thus responsible for their music. The other is the outsider who is clearly unhappy with the programme and the procedures."

"Fair enough, but neither of them are available to us right now," Pete said. "All we can do is wait here for Lady Eunice."

"I hope she comes to meet us soon," Bob said to his friends. "After all, I still have to go to the archives of the *Los Angeles Times*."

Jupiter looked at his watch again. "That shouldn't be a problem in terms of time. Perhaps you can go to the archives now, but don't linger there too long. We have an appointment at five o'clock that might help us."

Just at that moment, Lady Eunice Merrywell van Orten came onto the terrace, holding a coffee cup. "So, here I am again. Would you like to see our studio?"

"Pete and I would be very happy," Jupiter replied, "but Bob is leaving now as he has something to do."

Lady Eunice beamed. "Well, come along then!"

Ten minutes to five, Bob arrived back in Hollywood Heights. Jupiter and Pete were already waiting at Broken Dreams. The red-haired girl who looked like a strawberry was not there yet.

It was a small café whose walls were covered with signed photos of presumably actors and performers—none of whom the boys recognized.

"All failed stars," the waitress said as she came up to the boys. "Los Angeles is a city that never sleeps, but dreams forever." The waitress looked out of the window. There was a tall cactus there blocking the view of the surroundings. "—And Hollywood is the dream catcher where all dreams converge, except that not every dream is beautiful. There are enough nightmares out there... Anyway, what can I get you guys?"

"I'll have an orange soda and a piece of chocolate cake," said Jupiter.

Bob and Pete also placed their order and the waitress then disappeared into the kitchen.

"Sounds like she's had some experience in the movie world," Bob commented.

"Which waitress or waiter in LA doesn't have that?" Pete commented.

"Let's get to the important stuff now." Jupiter turned to Bob. "Were you able to find out anything this time?"

“What do you mean ‘this time’?” asked Bob reproachfully. “It’s not my fault that The Colourphonics weren’t very talkative, and I’ve never let you down when it comes to research.”

“Never say never.” Pete grinned.

“Anyway, at the newspaper archives, I found several reports about The Colourphonics.”

“Go ahead then!” Pete looked at his friend encouragingly.

“Well, the ensemble consists of a total of ten musicians. What is interesting is that all the members of The Colourphonics have one special thing in common—they are synaesthetes!”

“What?” Pete asked.

“Synaesthetes,” Bob repeated. “That comes from the word ‘synaesthesia’.”

Pete grinned. “That sounds like a disease—like amnesia or anaemia.”

“I wouldn’t call it a disease,” Jupiter said. “Synaesthesia is a condition in which information meant to stimulate one of your senses also stimulates one or more of your other senses. So if you have synaesthesia, you might notice that your senses tend to intertwine, giving your perceptions of the world an additional dimension.”

“That’s what it is, Jupe!” agreed Bob. He began to relate more of what he had found out about the subject. “There are various types of synaesthesia. So imagine if you hear music, it may at the same time evoke certain kinds of tastes... or if you hear certain sounds, words or numbers, you instantly trigger the visualization of coloured, generic shapes.”

“And what’s so special about that?” Pete wondered. “With me, every number also has a colour and so does music somehow. I thought it was like that for everyone!”

Jupiter and Bob glanced at each other. Then the First Investigator turned back to Pete. “Not everyone is like that.”

Now Pete looked disturbed. “No?”

“Fascinating!” Jupiter leaned back. “We should—”

That was as far as he got, as the red-haired girl entered the café. She looked around indecisively for a moment and stood on tiptoe to see better. Then she spotted The Three Investigators and walked towards them, smiling.

“I’m glad you’re here. It’s definitely time I talked to someone about this matter.” She dropped into an empty seat. “Before we start though, I’d like to know exactly who I’m dealing with.”

Jupiter handed her the card of The Three Investigators. She glanced at it and smiled. “Investigators, then. Okay, my name is Chloe Shoomer. You already know that I work for The Colourphonics during the holidays.”

Bob nodded. “Jupiter and Pete told me that Kappelhoff wasn’t the only one who was terrified by the music.”

“That’s right,” Chloe confirmed. “I was the other victim. It wasn’t as violent as Mr Kappelhoff’s, but it was very scary.” She looked at The Three Investigators seriously. “I know it sounds crazy, but three days ago, I also felt like the music was terrifying.

“It started very slowly. I got a slight headache, then my pulse got faster and faster and finally I got sick. I’ve never experienced that before during concerts and rehearsals. It was scary! At first I thought that maybe it wasn’t the music at all, but then Mr Kappelhoff collapsed at the next rehearsal—exactly during the same piece!”

“What piece?”

“It’s called *Phonophobia* and it was composed by Yamada-san himself.”

“Could it be that the combination of notes has something to do with the discomfort?” Bob pondered aloud.

"I asked my father the same thing," Chloe replied, "but he said that was out of the question."

"Are you a synaesthete by any chance?" asked Jupiter thoughtfully.

"Like my father? No, not me. I don't usually react very much to music."

"Do you have a theory as to what else it could be?"

Chloe looked down at the tabletop, which was artfully created with small and colourful ceramic tiles. With her index finger, she pushed a few sugar scraps together into a tiny pile. "Danielle Sherman almost quit The Colourphonics yesterday. She claimed that Yamada was summoning the forces of evil."

When Jupiter raised his eyebrows, Chloe quickly said: "—But I don't believe that. Miss Sherman has always been very imaginative... but I don't have a reasonable explanation either. Apart from that, there is no reason why Yamada should terrify his audience. On the contrary, he enjoys being celebrated and is desperate to be famous."

"That's what I found out from the *Los Angeles Times*," Bob confirmed. "His concerts are still known through insider tips at the moment. While Yamada's own compositions take some getting used to, he is considered an excellent conductor and composer."

"Is there anything else about him?" Jupe asked.

"The man likes to give interviews but never talks about his private life and little is known about his background. What is certain is that Howard Kaname Yamada is the son of a Japanese father and an American mother and grew up in Japan. After the death of his parents, he has spent the last few years working mainly in Europe."

"Then you know more about him than I do," Chloe admitted.

"Maybe there is someone who wants to harm this Yamada?" Pete pondered. "After all, it could be that other conductors are jealous of his successes."

"Then, The Colourphonics would be the victims, not the perpetrators," Jupiter said thoughtfully. "In any case, I wouldn't rule out that possibility, so we also have to put their competitors on our list of suspects."

"And as you said once before, a completely different person from the Villa of the Arts could also be involved in the incidents," Bob added, "for example, a caretaker, a cleaning lady, Lady Eunice or this Van der Wijk."

"I have a completely different question," Pete spoke up. "Supposedly, the rehearsals are totally secret. So how come you got to be there, Chloe?"

"Dad has always dragged me along. I used to play next to the stage. Then later I was allowed to do small jobs and finally work properly for the orchestra. I'm part of the team, so to speak."

"Too bad we can't get closer to the musicians," Bob commented.

"That can change. We are still looking for trustworthy helpers for the next concert. Shall I suggest you?"

"That would be a good idea!" thought Jupiter. "That way we can investigate inconspicuously on the spot."

"Fine. Then I'll get back to you as soon as I've talked to Yamada and Lady Eunice." Chloe waved at the waitress. "Right now though, I need a chocolate cake!"

6. At the Hospital

The next morning, The Three Investigators were standing in the brand-new music corner of the salvage yard. Uncle Titus and Aunt Mathilda had agreed that the smaller instruments and music accessories be displayed in a large glass cabinet, and the larger stuff, like the barrel organs be placed under a small canopy next to the fence.

"Make sure you set this corner up nicely for me!" Aunt Mathilda called out to the boys. "Musicians are sensitive people who have eyes for beauty."

"If she thinks so," Pete said quietly as he placed an empty violin case on a table.

"This is a good opportunity to do a test," Jupiter said.

He cleared away a box of music books and rolled out one of the barrel organs. It was the one with the little toy monkey. "Just describe what you see, Pete."

The First Investigator began to turn the crank. Immediately the first sounds came out of the pipes. The monkey was set in motion by a mechanism and mechanically struck the cymbals together. A small cloud of dust swirled up. Bob coughed.

"That's not so easy to say now." Pete closed his eyes. "It feels green... with a few sprinkles of yellow and... well, pink."

"Fascinating indeed!" Jupiter paused in his movement. "That was test number one."

Jupe picked up a small bongo drum and beat on it. "What are you sensing?"

"Beige with a little turquoise."

"Now just answer me with the first colour that comes to your mind. Ready?"

Pete nodded.

"Eight."

"Yellow."

"B."

"Turquoise."

"Four."

"Red."

"Z."

"Black."

"Seven."

"Blue."

"Eight."

"Yellow."

"B."

"Turquoise. Uh, didn't you already ask me that?"

Jupiter nodded. "The repetition is part of the test procedure."

"Pete, you actually couple colours with sounds, numbers, and letters!" said Bob, impressed.

"*Quod erat demonstrandum.*" Jupiter was visibly satisfied with his series of tests.

"*Quod* what?" Pete asked.

"That's Latin, commonly abbreviated to *Q.E.D.*, which means: 'What was to be proved'," Jupe explained. "Pete—you are a synaesthete!"

“It seems so,” Bob said, “at least as far as colours, sounds, numbers, and letters are concerned. However, there are also quite different combinations, for example, sounds and tastes. With others, it’s shapes and colours. Pete doesn’t necessarily have all the characteristics.”

The Second Investigator thought for a moment, and then said: “Well, I definitely do not taste music!”

“It’s better that way!” Bob laughed. “Imagine your favourite band producing a song that tastes like rancid grease or castor oil.”

“I’d say I’ve had enough of all this colour stuff!” The Second Investigator turned back to the table where the old violin case stood. “So, what is it? Are you going to help me set this stuff up for ‘sensitive people who have eyes for beauty’?”

At that moment, Jupiter stopped and stared across to the outdoor workshop. A small red light was shining there—a sign that the telephone was ringing in Headquarters. Jupiter had built the light system a few years ago from old electrical parts.

“That could be Chloe!” Already the First Investigator was making his way to the trailer.

The quickest access was through the Cold Gate—a secret entrance from the salvage yard to Headquarters. This was a battered, large refrigerator that seemed to have been placed randomly in a heap of scrap metal and junk.

Jupiter looked around briefly to make sure that no outsider was watching him. Then he opened the fridge door, climbed in, and triggered a mechanism that allowed the back door of the fridge to slide open. This revealed a short dark tunnel that led to the trailer.

By the time the First Investigator got into Headquarters, the phone had already stopped ringing, but a light was flashing on the answering machine. Jupiter switched on the ceiling lamp, went to the answering machine and pressed the play button.

“Hello, you three! It’s me, Chloe.” The girl’s voice sounded weak and almost sickly. “Today I was listening in during rehearsal... and it happened again—only much worse this time. I’m in hospital now!” She paused for a moment, as if she needed to regain her strength first. “If you want to know more, I’m at Maple Hills Health Centre, Ward A2.”

The Three Investigators informed Aunt Mathilda that they needed to go to the hospital. When she heard that it was about a visit to the sick, her caring streak showed. “Poor child!” she said, pressing a small bowl of fruit into Jupiter’s hand. “Give her this! She should take lots of vitamins.”

Jupiter did not object. He got into Bob’s Beetle with the bowl and they drove along the coastal road to Los Angeles.

Maple Hills Health Centre was a small hospital near the Villa of the Arts. It was set against a gentle hill that rose behind the building. In front were several palm trees and ornamental shrubs.

“She’s in Ward A2,” Jupe reported when they had parked the Beetle.

“Green-purple,” said Pete.

“Excuse me?”

The Second Investigator grinned. “A2—that’s green-purple for me.”

“Green-purple for you.” Bob looked at a plaque posted at the entrance. “For others, it’s the second floor, on the left.”

It was not difficult to find their way around the small hospital as the corridors were well signposted.

Shortly afterwards, The Three Investigators were standing in front of Chloe's bed. The girl was so pale that her freckles glowed almost eerily. "Glad you could come!" she said.

Jupiter put the bowl of fruit on the bedside table. "With best regards from my aunt."

Chloe looked at him in surprise, but said nothing.

"So what exactly happened?" asked Pete. "Did the music really get to you? Was it like what happened to Mr Kappelhoff?"

"Yes. It happened again during the performance of *Phonophobia*." The girl sat up with difficulty. "At first, only various dark sounds came into play. Slowly more and more instruments set in. The music seemed strange, almost unworldly, even to The Colourphonics, and then..."

"—And that's when the strange sensations started?" Jupe surmised.

"I only remember that I felt... somehow... highly focussed. I was caught up in the pull of the sounds from the very beginning."

"Stronger than last time?"

"Much stronger! At some point it got really intense. I suddenly had a terrible headache. Then I felt hot and my nose started bleeding. The whole Green Room was spinning."

"And then?"

"I don't know. I fainted."

"Headaches and dizziness had been described before," Jupiter noted, "but nose bleeds are new!"

"By the time I got here at the hospital, my T-shirt looked like I was splatted in blood," Chloe reported.

"Yuck!" Pete gasped.

"My father was totally upset." Chloe let herself sink back onto her pillow. "He was terrified for me and he's also worried because he's afraid there might be something wrong with The Colourphonics."

"What about your mother?" Pete looked at the girl sympathetically.

"She doesn't know about it yet. She is currently shooting a documentary movie in Congo. I think she would be completely overwhelmed with the situation here too. Everything that cannot be seen through the viewfinder of a camera is scary to her."

"Will the concert still go ahead?" asked Bob.

"I suppose so. So far no one has publicly claimed that the music is dangerous. The incidents have been handled very discreetly so as not to damage the orchestra's reputation. Danielle Sherman will certainly say something about ghosts and curses again, but nobody believes her anyway."

"Danielle Sherman?" Pete knew the name had come up before, but he didn't remember in what context.

"She's one of The Colourphonics," Chloe explained, "and she believes that *Phonophobia* is cursed and shouldn't be played."

"Maybe she's just imagining it, but there could be more to it," Jupiter said.

"With Danielle?" Chloe laughed. "No, definitely not. I've known her ever since I can remember, and believe me, she's always been that wacky!"

"When Raymondo Kappelhoff collapsed, he was the only person in the audience," Bob now interjected into the conversation. "How was it with you?"

"I was also alone," Chloe confirmed. "The rehearsals always take place in private."

"This secrecy is strange, isn't it?"

"Not necessarily," said Chloe. "The air of mystery is part of the orchestra's trademark. The Colourphonics pride themselves on being special in every way and standing out from

normal ensembles.”

“We already noticed that,” Bob said. “It wasn’t even possible to talk to them. We have a whole group of suspects and hardly any way to check them all out.”

“That can change. Tomorrow you’ll have a job! My father put in a good word for you. I won’t be released until tomorrow at the earliest. After that, I’ll probably be out for the next few days, so there’ll be a lot of work to do there.”

“Then we are the new helpers of The Colourphonics from now on?” asked Jupiter with satisfaction.

“Tomorrow at ten o’clock you can start!” confirmed Chloe.

The door opened and a tall woman entered. She wore a white coat, white trousers and health shoes. Through her brown horn-rimmed glasses she eyed Chloe first, then The Three Investigators. “I’m Dr Grey and I’d like to ask a few more questions. Are you all family?”

“No,” Chloe admitted, “but I have no secrets from the boys. Go ahead.”

“Very well,” the doctor said coolly and strode past The Three Investigators to Chloe’s bed. “I understand you collapsed during a performance at the Villa of the Arts. Could you describe to me what you felt?”

Chloe sighed. “I had spoken about that earlier, didn’t I?”

“The questions are asked at every admission, but as your attending physician, I need to hear everything again directly from you.”

“Why?”

Dr Grey had obviously not expected this question. “That is a standard procedure for us.”

Chloe sighed. “Rather cumbersome, don’t you think?”

“My own opinion doesn’t matter. My job is to make you well and to follow the procedures of this hospital.”

“That’s all right. I’ll tell you everything again for my sake.”

“Thank you.” The doctor smiled, but it didn’t look genuine, but rather strained.

“The symptoms were headaches, dizziness, nose bleeds and fainting.”

The young doctor noted something on a clipboard. “Did you notice anything peculiar?”

“Anything peculiar?” Chloe shook her head.

“Was the music perhaps too loud? Or unpleasant?”

“Chloe was probably just overtired and hadn’t had enough to drink!” Jupiter gave Chloe a meaningful look.

She immediately responded. “Yes, I really do drink too little sometimes. My goodness, if I remember correctly, I only had one peppermint tea in the morning. After that... wait... after that I didn’t drink anything at all. Very stupid, huh?”

“Okay...” Again the doctor made a note. “Can you describe your headache?”

“A normal headache, that is, my head hurt.” Chloe looked at Jupiter as if for confirmation that she was saying the right thing.

The First Investigator turned to the doctor. “Chloe gets headaches quite often, but usually a ‘toluene’ tablet helps. You can’t take more than two of those a day though, can you?”

“You should be careful with the dose,” the doctor confirmed.

Then there was a knock at the door and someone entered the room. It was a young man pushing a trolley with trays. “So, here is the cake express, but the food and drink are only for people who are in bed.” He grinned at The Three Investigators, and then glanced at the doctor.

The woman hooked the pen on the clipboard, adjusted her brown glasses and turned to go. “I must be on my way. Thank you.” With brisk steps, she left the room. The young man with the serving trolley looked at her leaving.

“Was that the doctor on duty?” Jupiter immediately wanted to know.

“Her?” The young man pushed the wheeled table to Chloe’s bedside. “Nah, the doctor on duty is Dr Millbridge. I’ve never seen that woman before.”

“That’s what I thought!” Jupiter remarked tensely. “Her questions struck me as odd right away, and then she didn’t even flinch when I mentioned ‘toluene’ tablets. Toluene is not a medicine at all, but a solvent. Whoever that woman was, she was not a doctor.”

“Then what are you still standing here for?” Pete was already at the door. “Come on, fellas, we have to find out who she is and what she wanted!”

7. Pete Gives Chase

The young woman in the white coat was already standing in front of one of the lifts, nervously waiting for the door to open. When she saw the boys, she turned away from the lift and headed for the stairs in quick steps.

“We’ll get her!” shouted Pete. “Faster, fellas!”

The Second Investigator had already reached the door to the staircase. From the sound of it, the fake doctor hurried down the stairs. She was already out of sight as the boys ran down the stairs.

Somewhere a heavy door rattled.

“Where is she?”

“Could she have gone out at the first floor?”

“That’ll be one way to trick us!”

“Not me!” Pete took the next flight of stairs in one leap. Jupiter and Bob were close on his heels.

At Ward A1, the Second Investigator yanked open the door and looked around. A corridor led off to the left and right respectively. An orderly was pushing an empty bed towards a lift and an old woman with a walker was hobbling towards them.

“I don’t see her!” Bob looked around frantically.

Jupiter, on the other hand, approached the orderly who had arrived at the lift along with the bed. “Did you see a woman in a hurry here just now?” he gasped. “—Relatively tall, wearing a white coat and trousers, brown hair, horn-rimmed glasses?”

“I think so,” the man replied. “She went that way to the left—towards the terrace!”

“Thank you!” Jupiter was already starting to move again.

The left corridor led past several locked room doors and ended at a wide glass door. Behind it was a terrace that led directly onto the manicured green grass of the hill. An irrigation system sprayed fine veils over the lawn.

“I thought we were on the first floor!” said Pete, puzzled, as they ran out into the glaring sunlight.

“We are, but the building is on a slope.” Jupiter puffed.

“There she goes!” cried Bob breathlessly. “To the car park!”

Pete immediately sped off, followed by Bob. Jupiter huffed, panting heavily behind his two friends. “We... will... never... catch... her!”

Soon, Pete started to sprint down the hill. However, he did not have a good grip on the wet grass with his shoes. Twice he almost fell lengthways. The Second Investigator slithered more than he ran. Nevertheless, he was catching up. The fake doctor rummaged in her pockets as she ran. Again and again, she looked around. This cost her valuable time.

When she realized that she had no chance of reaching her car in time, she turned a corner and headed for a construction site to the right of the hospital. Apparently a new wing of the hospital was being built there. A high construction fence surrounded the area, but at one point, a driveway was open for trucks and excavators. The woman rushed across the sandy driveway and then disappeared behind the board fence.

Pete did not wait for his two friends. He cut off a man with a wheelbarrow, rounded a stack of steel girders and ran towards some assembled scaffolding frames that were in front of him.

“Stop! Stop!” an angry male voice roared, but Pete paid no attention.

Where was the fake doctor now? That was when the Second Investigator caught sight of a grey expanse on the ground in which fresh shoe prints could be seen. The woman had run through the wet concrete to escape!

Pete circled the rectangle of wet concrete as more voices sounded behind him. If he followed the tracks, he might have a chance! But by then, several construction workers were coming towards him.

“You idiot!”

“Get the boss!”

“Why don’t you stop that guy?”

“Just you wait, boy!”

A huge man in work clothes cut Pete off. The Second Investigator tried to duck away, but by then the giant had caught him. “Gotcha!”

“Just hold him tight, Tucker!”

Now the other construction workers approached. One of them eyed Pete angrily. “How dare you just walk into the construction site?”

“Look at the damage you caused on the wet concrete!” a little man in a yellow helmet cursed. “This is going to cost your parents dearly!”

“A woman in a white coat ran over the concrete—not me! You can see that from the shoe prints,” the Second Investigator defended himself. “They’re not mine! Really!”

“You can tell that to your grandmother!” the giant boomed angrily.

“This is a construction site, not a children’s playground!”

Frantically, Pete looked around for Jupiter and Bob.

“We’re going to the site manager now!”

Roughly, Pete was pushed in the direction of several portable site offices. Then he finally spotted his two friends. Jupiter was talking to a man who was wearing a helmet but not work clothes. Instead, he was in a suit and tie.

“We’ll take you to the boss first, boy!” said the little man as the giant pulled Pete towards Jupiter, Bob and the man in the suit.

“—And that’s why my friend was not aware about unauthorized entry into your construction site,” Jupiter just concluded his argument.

The man scratched his head. Apparently Jupiter had just explained something very complicated to him.

“He ran right through the wet concrete!” the big man said accusingly.

“Not at all,” Jupiter argued. “A check of my friend’s shoes will show that he had no contact with wet concrete. Moreover, you will find that the shoe prints do not match the shoes my friend wears—in size, shape and tread pattern. Thus, you cannot hold him responsible for the damage to the concrete.”

The giant looked at the First Investigator in confusion.

“In fact, you should be looking for a tall woman with brown hair, who must still be somewhere here on the premises,” Jupiter continued.

“I’d better check it out!” one of the men said and sauntered off.

The little one with the helmet nevertheless pointed accusingly at Pete. “But he just ran in here.”

“The construction site entrance was not properly marked,” Jupiter calmly replied. “It is your responsibility to clearly indicate that unauthorized persons are not allowed to enter the construction site. Also, the entrances should be secured so that no children can enter. Imagine if something had happened to us here!”

“But nothing happened!”

“You’re lucky, sir!” replied Jupiter smugly. “You’ll be lucky if our parents don’t report the site management for gross negligence!”

“It’s all right,” grumbled the man in the suit. “I’ll let your friend go... but only on the condition that I don’t see you here again!”

“Thank you, sir!” said Jupiter formally. Then he turned to Pete. “Now come. Let’s not hold up the work here unnecessarily.”

“Thanks, Jupe,” Pete said as they stepped back into the car park. “I thought they were going to report me.”

“I hope they find the woman.” Bob peered through the open driveway at the construction site.

“She has certainly found a way out.” Jupe looked dissatisfied. “The construction site wasn’t very well secured. There will probably be other exits or a way to climb over the fence somewhere.”

“After all, she has to get back to her car at some point.” Pete glanced across the car park. “She’s not going to leave it at the hospital.”

“She could ask someone to pick it up,” Bob interjected, “and we have no way of checking which car is hers. After all, there are more than fifteen cars here.”

“I’m afraid that’s right,” Jupiter said. “If we knew more about this ominous person, we could use the process of elimination and narrow down the selection of cars significantly. As it is, I guess we have no choice but to put a question mark over the woman for the time being.”

8. Sophisticated Instruments

“Guys, I need your help reeling in the cables!” Mr Shoomer stood in the middle of the Green Room and was the only one who didn’t look stressed.

The Three Investigators had met Chloe’s father half an hour ago. He was a friendly man with sparse red hair and nickel glasses. Of The Colourphonics, he was the only one who had talked to the three boys so far. The other musicians still seemed as closed off as the room they were in. The Green Room was a large room painted dark green with no windows.

“We’re coming!” Pete stepped over a box and headed for Mr Shoomer. As he did so, his elbow brushed a series of pendulums that was fixed on a frame. Vibrating sounds rang out, slowly increasing in volume. It was as if the area around the frame was vibrating.

“Oh, I’m sorry!” said Pete quickly.

A woman with short blonde hair rushed over, gave Pete a reproachful look and flipped a small switch. The intense noise slowly died away.

“Hands off the ‘pendulium’!” she said sharply. “—And don’t touch the console either!”

Pete cleared his throat sheepishly. “Yes, ma’am.”

The woman did not give him another glance, but walked with firm steps back to the colleagues she had been speaking with before.

Mr Shoomer smiled. “So you’ve already made the acquaintance of Lucie Bland. If you don’t want trouble, you’d better stay out of her way—especially in the morning. She’s in a particularly bad mood then.”

“I noticed that.” Pete glanced at the blonde woman while Jupiter and Bob gave Chloe’s father a hand. “Does she play that weird pendulum thing?”

“Yes, she plays the pendulium with us,” said Mr Shoomer. “In fact, she practically created that instrument with the help of some of us here. Its unique sound is based on the swing of pendulums, monitored by light sensors attached to a computer console, which then generates the associated sounds. However, one should never set the pendulums swinging uncontrollably.”

“Could that have dangerous repercussions?” asked Jupiter quietly.

“Dangerous repercussions?” Mr Shoomer looked at him, puzzled. “No, it can’t be really dangerous. At most, the sound can be quite unpleasant and intense at times, but it couldn’t seriously harm anyone.”

Pete looked at the instruments that were already set up. “Doesn’t anyone here play the violin or oboe?”

Now Mr Shoomer laughed. “Not with The Colourphonics! We play music on rare electronic instruments and custom-made ones we developed ourselves. Miss Rubinstein over there, for example, plays the theremin.” He pointed to a small woman with brown curls. “That’s an electronic musical instrument that produces sounds without you having to touch it directly... and Mr Du Prez has a custom-made harmonium that produces particularly high frequency ranges—something like a dog whistle.”

“And the lady there?” Bob pointed to an older woman with long curly hair.

“That is Danielle Sherman with her electronic accordion.”

“If all these instruments are playing at the same time, wouldn’t it sound very interesting?”

“Very true. We offer an ordinary audience the opportunity to feel extraordinary for the duration of a concert. Before you ask if it’s dangerous, we have a very strict ethical policy. The frequencies we generate must not harm humans or animals.”

Jupiter looked at Chloe’s father appraisingly. “Theoretically, they could, though?”

“That would be very theoretical. Why are you concerned about it?”

“We just don’t know that much about this subject yet,” Jupiter explained. “After we heard that your daughter collapsed during a rehearsal, we didn’t want to put ourselves in danger as well.”

Mr Shoomer looked chagrined. “Chloe thinks it was the music, but I just can’t imagine that. It’s not like anyone else got hurt.”

“However, you are all also wearing these sophisticated headphones, as I have noticed.” Jupiter lifted the headphone Mr Shoomer had put down next to his equipment.

“We are synaesthetes,” the musician explained. “That’s why we have these special headphones on during the concert.”

“Noise-cancelling headphones, I suppose,” Jupe said.

“Not just that,” Mr Shoomer explained. “They have band-pass filters that allow through audio frequencies of a certain range while attenuate frequencies outside that range. As highly sensitive people, the many impressions can sometimes overwhelm us and distract us. We have to be absolutely focussed when we work. These headphones help us do just that.”

“The headphones won’t avert disaster!”

Mr Shoomer flinched. He had not noticed that Danielle Sherman had stepped behind him. She held her electronic accordion in her hands and made a face as if she was in mortal danger at the moment. “I’ve been dreaming of dragons—dark creatures that devour us all.”

“Danielle, enough with your scary stories!” a man said in passing.

“You will be surprised! *Phonophobia* is cursed! This performance will bring great disaster upon us.”

“Maybe you should change psychologists!” someone suggested.

“James!” said Mr Shoomer indignantly. “I beg your pardon! Why do you talk to Danielle like that?”

“It’s true, isn’t it?” James argued.

“We don’t have time for private conversations!” A man with black hair and Asian features had stepped into the middle of the room. He clapped his hands together. “I don’t want to hear any more conversations. Set up your instruments so we can begin.”

Although he was very small in stature and had not even spoken aloud, his words had been so penetrating that all the musicians suddenly fell silent. The authority that emanated from him was impressive.

At second glance, however, Jupiter realized that the man looked sickly—like someone who was just recovering from a hospital stay. The First Investigator also spotted the earphones the man was wearing like a hearing aid.

The man clapped his hands once more, then walked to the conductor’s podium. When his footsteps had faded away, an oppressive silence fell over the room. It lasted a few seconds. Then a few musicians began to pick up their instruments and carry them to the stage area. The colour artist, Mr Van der Wijk, stared bitterly at the conductor’s podium but said nothing. In fact, no one spoke another word.

Only when everything was set up did Mr Shoomer murmur to The Three Investigators: “That was Mr Yamada, our conductor.”

"That's what I thought," Bob muttered.

"You'd better go to the office now and see to the programme booklet with Lady Eunice," Mr Shoomer added. "Chloe unfortunately didn't get to finish her work yesterday."

"We'll do that, sir," Jupiter promised. Together with Pete and Bob, he left the Green Room.

The door had hardly fallen shut behind them when they heard nothing more from The Colourphonics.

"The room is actually completely soundproofed!" remarked Bob in surprise.

"That's also a good thing. After my experience with the pendulum thing, I can do without any more sounds from them!" Pete admitted. "I like normal music much better."

The boys walked along the glass corridor and then climbed a spiral staircase that led to another annex of the building.

There was Lady Eunice's office. It was a large room completely filled with art objects, music books and musical instruments. Jupiter felt amusingly reminded of the salvage yard. Lady Eunice could almost rival Uncle Titus with her collection of old curiosities.

On one of the four large mahogany desks stood a comparatively modern computer that did not match the rest of the items at all. Lady Eunice sat in front of it, looking stressed at the computer screen. "Good of you to come. I'm just not familiar with these technical things."

"Do you do all the advertising and public relations yourself?" Bob was astonished. "Normally an agency takes care of something like that, don't you think?"

"We do work with an agency from time to time, but The Colourphonics do not like to reveal too much to other parties." Lady Eunice took a sip from her coffee cup. "The next concert will be on a relatively small scale anyway. It's a special performance that has been created in cooperation with an acquaintance of mine." She handed Bob several sheets of paper. "This is just a draft, but you can already see the direction it's going to take."

Bob looked at the plain white paper that read 'PHONOPHOBIA' in large letters.

"Fancy." Pete took the paper from his friend's hand before he had finished reading it.

"We are having the programme booklet produced in a small print shop near here. It will of course be printed on fine paper and feature glossy photos."

"Then we should get everything ready today so that the printer can have enough time to get them printed," Bob said. He worked part-time at Sax Sendler's Rock Plus music agency and had experience with creating flyers and advertising brochures for musical events.

"You can sit here." Lady Eunice stood up from her office chair. Then she handed Bob a handwritten list. "This is all the information we have to take into account—the names of the musicians, the pieces that will be played, and of course all our sponsors."

Jupiter and Pete, meanwhile, almost felt a little superfluous. They stood idly next to the desk and looked around. Pete was still holding the draft programme in his hand, but had not looked at it any further.

"If it's all right with you, I'll go get another coffee," Lady Eunice said. "I'll be right back."

"We'll work on it, ma'am," Bob promised.

"*Phonophobia*," Jupiter murmured when the woman had left the room. "So the production will revolve around Yamada's own composition—the piece where both Mr Kappelhoff and Chloe Shoomer collapsed."

"I'd say this sounds out of the ordinary." Pete put the draft programme on the table. "If the music has indeed got worse from rehearsal to rehearsal, I don't want to know what it will sound like on the night of the performance. Probably people in the audience will drop dead."

Bob looked up in horror. Pete raised his hands defensively. "Hey, I was just kidding."

“So far, we know too little to make gloomy prophecies. That we can safely leave to Danielle Sherman.” Jupiter grabbed an office chair and wheeled it next to Bob. “It’s good that we now have an overview of everyone involved. We should also find out about the partners and sponsors who are supporting this special event, as well as the location.”

“No problem.” Bob looked down the list. “The location is written right here and—” He startled.

“What is it?” Jupiter tried to take a look at the list. Pete also leaned forward curiously.

“You won’t believe it!” Bob looked at his friends. “The venue is in Black Canyon.”

“Wait a minute!” Pete said. “There’s only one building there!”

“Exactly,” Bob confirmed. “Terror Castle!”

9. Return to Terror Castle

“I never really wanted to go back there again!” Pete confessed and shivered at the thought of going back to Terror Castle.

The castle was located in Black Canyon, a narrow little canyon up above Hollywood. It was originally called ‘Terrill’s Castle’ because it was built by a movie actor named Stephen Terrill, who was a big star back in the silent movie era.

Years ago, The Three Investigators were looking for a haunted house for use in a movie. That was when they came to know of Terror Castle and the secret behind it. During their investigations, the boys found very scary and seemingly real activities going on inside the castle, in particular the Fog of Fear and the Blue Phantom.

Some time after the case was solved, the castle was opened to the public, showcasing old scary movies in the projection room. Visitors could also wander around and be frightened by the Fog of Fear and other gadgets that had been installed for giving people a harmless thrill. That was probably the last of what The Three Investigators had heard about the place. Now they were about to go back there!

“It is, after all, an atmospheric place for cultural events,” Jupiter pointed out. “I believe that the concert would be held in the old projection room. They just need to set up a large screen for Mr Van der Wijk to show his colour accompaniment while the orchestra plays.”

“How appropriate it is for terror-filled music to be showcased at Terror Castle,” Pete commented.

Bob looked at the documents. “The only strange thing is that a certain Mr Robert J Flint is listed here as a contact. I’ve never heard of him.”

“RJ is our concert partner,” a deep, smoky voice sounded from the door.

The Three Investigators turned around, startled.

Lady Eunice entered the room, with a coffee cup in her hand. “At the beginning of the year, he took over the management of the castle from a relative of his—his uncle, I think. In any case, the idea of doing a concert in the castle came up soon after.”

“Well, the building is well suited for an extraordinary event,” Jupe commented.

Lady Eunice smiled proudly. “It will be a spectacle of a special kind. I am convinced of that.”

“Hopefully not too special,” Pete murmured.

Fortunately, Lady Eunice did not hear this comment. She had quite a few suggestions for the programme and the boys were busy all morning rearranging texts on the computer, making test printouts and finally phoning the printer.

After an extremely short and late lunch break, The Three Investigators were intercepted by the colour artist Mr Van der Wijk, who looked very stressed. “That Yamada guy is about to do another run-through with the musicians, but my stuff has to be taken to the venue now as I need time to set them up. There’s no other way. So please help me dismantle my equipment.”

They walked together to the Green Room, where Mr Shoomer smiled briefly but friendly at them from his seat at the laser harp. The other musicians did not seem very pleased about the disruption. Sceptical glances met The Three Investigators.

“Hurry up, I’ll be glad to get out of this musty green music den!” hissed Mr Van der Wijk.

The Three Investigators helped the artist to put all his equipment into large black bags and take them to the garage next to the institute building. There was a van with the inscription ‘Villa of the Arts’.

“I really need a little break now!” Mr Van der Wijk groaned. “Surely you already have a driver’s licence, don’t you?”

“Yes, we do,” Pete said after stowing the last bag in the van.

Mr Van der Wijk took a deep breath. “Then please drive ahead and deliver the things to the Black Canyon. I’ll follow later in my own car. Shall I give you the exact address?”

“No thanks, we know where to go,” Jupiter replied.

“Not much has changed here,” Pete remarked as they drove along the narrow, steeply ascending road a little later.

There was not a house in sight far and wide. The hillsides rose right next to the road and were thick with dry, low bushes. It was hard to believe that the busy streets of Hollywood were very close to this wasteland.

The Three Investigators could still remember exactly how Worthington had chauffeured them through Black Canyon in the Rolls-Royce back then.

“It’s really like our first case!” said Bob.

“Actually, quite a few details have already changed,” Jupe said. “When we first visited, there was a mass of rocks and gravel blocking the road. Obviously it had to be cleared away when visitors were allowed into the castle. By now we should be able to drive right up there without any obstacles.”

“In any case, I’m not at all comfortable with this place,” Pete admitted. “The memory is anything but pleasant!”

“Let me remind you that fear and terror are merely feelings,” Jupe said. “You will be terrified, but I assure you, no harm will come of it.”

“Somehow I recall having heard you say that before...” Pete mumbled.

A while later, Pete had steered the van further through the gorge. Although it was afternoon, there was a dusty twilight. He even considered for a moment whether he should turn on the headlights, but then he dropped the idea. Eventually the gorge widened and immediately became a little brighter.

Soon, the boys had a clear view of the castle that was enthroned against one wall of the narrow, rock-strewn canyon. As was the last time, the castle was enveloped in murky shadow.

They saw the round, peaked tower that stretched skyward far above them. Then there was the shorter tower that seemed to radiate something threatening. The Three Investigators felt as if time had simply stood still since their last visit. It was only when they got closer that they saw more apparent changes. There were tubs of green plants, gravel on the driveway, new windows, and a car park that could not be seen from the road. It was located to the side of the castle behind some jagged rocks.

“The sight of cars would negatively affect the overall impression,” Jupiter said as they got out.

“Shall I unload the bags?” asked Pete.

“Not yet. We should first check whether there is someone here.” The First Investigator looked at the main entrance. “This time we can enter the castle in the regular way and not have to sneak into the building in the middle of the night.”

“Lucky!” Pete remarked.

They walked up the old marble steps and across a tiled terrace to a wide doorway. At the big, carved front door, Jupiter tugged an old bell pull. A chime sounded inside the castle.

The boys had to wait quite a while until the large door opened with a long screech that curdled Pete’s blood.

A man with thick blond hair looked at them. Jupiter estimated him to be in his early forties. Well-trained, tanned and dressed in sporty clothes, he looked like a trainer from one of the big gyms in LA. At first sight, this made him no more suited to Terror Castle than Lady Eunice was suited to the Villa of the Arts.

“We’d like to talk to Mr Flint,” Jupiter said coolly. “We work for The Colourphonics.”

“You’ve come to the right place. I’m Robert Flint.”

“Very good. We are delivering the equipment for Mr Van der Wijk, who will do the colour accompaniment for the concert. Shall we take them to the projection room right away?”

“That would be good.” The man looked at his watch. “I have an appointment with the catering people in half an hour. You should be done by then.”

The boys then brought the bags of equipment from the van. From the main entrance, Mr Flint led them down a long, dark corridor, past open doorways, and finally to a large hall with a circular stone wall and a ceiling two storeys high. In several shallow alcoves stood suits of armour. This was the Echo Hall as the boys remembered it.

“How did you come to manage this castle?” asked Jupiter. His voice echoed eerily off the circular wall.

“Oh you know, my uncle used to host movie nights here for a while. The concept was an absolute blast! The place was almost always sold out. At some point, he made enough money so he could finally realize what he had always dreamed of—taking a trip around the world.”

“That’s when you stepped in as the manager?”

“That’s right,” Mr Flint replied. “I am a business economist and event manager. So it made sense for me to take care of this place while he’s flying from country to country. Just yesterday he called me from Finland.”

The manager then stepped up to a door that had a little brass plate engraved with the words ‘Projection Room’. He opened the door. “Here we are. Please take the things to the room behind the screen.”

The projection room was a huge hall, with about a hundred plush-lined seats in it. Far over on one side was the all too familiar pipe organ with huge pipes stretching up to the high ceiling.

The Three Investigators carried the bags past the old upholstered chairs. The room smelled faintly of dust, but they could see that it had been cleaned regularly. The movie screen had been replaced and the pipe organ had apparently been repaired as well. It shone in the warm light of the hall lighting. Behind the movie screen was a door leading to a room where they placed the bags of equipment.

The three of them would have liked to look around further, but Mr Flint did not let them out of his sight.

Half an hour later, Mr Van der Wijk appeared. The colour artist proceeded to set up his equipment with the boys' help. He didn't make the work any enjoyable by occasionally uttering stressed comments.

It took what felt like an eternity before the control desk alone was finally in place. Mr Van der Wijk's mood was by now in the basement. Apart from an abysmal 'I'd love to leave right now', he was quite taciturn about the work that followed.

"I'm sure it will be a great event," Jupiter tried to start a conversation. "This projection room has an incredible atmosphere. Did Mr Yamada choose this castle personally?"

"I don't know," Van der Wijk replied. "I'm not interested either."

"He is an important conductor and composer," Jupiter continued talking as if he did not notice the bad mood of the colour artist.

"Maybe," the artist grumbled. He rummaged in a bag of cables for a conspicuously long time.

"Of course, you could make it big with your art."

"What do you know about it?" Mr Van der Wijk asked.

The First Investigator had understood that Mr Van der Wijk simply did not want to talk. So he too turned back to his work and silently handed the artist his graphics tablet.

When everything was finally set up, the boys left the castle. They were asked to take the van back to the Villa of the Arts in Hollywood.

The air in the canyon had cooled noticeably in the meantime. The tall tower of the castle cast a long, sinister shadow—like a gloomy finger reaching out to the boys. Soon the first bats would fly out. Crickets chirped in the dry bushes, otherwise the area was almost oppressively quiet.

Then there was a rustling somewhere in the distance. The First Investigator listened, but at first could not discover the source of the noise. While Pete rummaged in his backpack for the van keys, Jupiter continued to look around. Hadn't there been a shadow just now? He blinked. Diagonally opposite, on one of the mountain slopes, a few stones came loose and rolled down the steep slope.

"We are being watched!" murmured Jupiter to his two friends.

"Indeed!" Now Bob had also spotted the slender figure that was taking cover behind a bush. "That was a woman! I'm almost sure of it!"

"Should I run after her?" asked Pete.

"No," Jupiter decided. "By the time you climb up the slope, she'll have long disappeared to the other side. In the worst case scenario, she might trigger a small avalanche, either intentionally or unintentionally, during her escape. That's too dangerous!"

"Right!" The Second Investigator remembered all too well the landslide he and Jupiter had experienced here. "Then let's get going. I'm tired and hungry. Apart from that, I can well do without hanging around this area after sunset."

10. *Phonophobia*

“You’re late,” Jupiter said as Bob drove his Beetle into the salvage yard the next morning. There was no reproach in his voice. It was merely an observation.

Bob grinned. “I found out some interesting things to make up for that!”

“You can tell us about it on the way there.” Jupiter got into the car and greeted Pete, who was already sitting in the back seat.

“Last night, I was on the phone with Mr Kappelhoff,” Bob reported as he turned out of the salvage yard. “I asked him if The Colourphonics had any enemies. He couldn’t think of a specific name, but he said that Howard Yamada had had conflicts with his musicians before and also with the director of a music hall.”

“So he is a difficult character...” Jupe surmised.

“Very difficult,” Bob confirmed. “Whoever works with him must have a thick skin.”

“Then again, not everyone has,” Jupiter said. “We saw for ourselves how Mr Van der Wijk complained. He didn’t want to talk about Yamada, but I saw the anger in his eyes when I mentioned his name.”

Pete laughed softly. “Geniuses can sometimes have difficult personalities.”

“Intelligence does not necessarily lead to a questionable personality,” Jupiter argued, somewhat presuming that Pete’s point was also targeting at him.

“In Yamada’s case, it was definitely not just intelligence,” Bob interjected into the conversation. “This also brings us to the next point—Kappelhoff told me that Yamada is not only synaesthetic, but also has some kind of illness that makes him hypersensitive to sounds. So I called a specialist this morning.”

“What kind of specialist?” Pete asked.

“The man is a specialist in the field of ear, nose and throat,” Bob replied. “He gave my father an interview a fortnight ago.”

“An ear, nose and throat specialist? What does he have to do with our case?” Pete wanted to know.

“Then let me tell you! The specialist remembered Dad and was very nice. When I told him about Yamada’s case, he was pretty sure that the conductor has what is called ‘phonophobia’.”

“As if synaesthesia isn’t enough.” Pete sighed.

“Simplified, phonophobia means that someone finds certain sounds distressing. In Yamada’s case, this may have been triggered by synaesthesia. He was overloaded with sensory impressions, so to speak. For him, some sounds could therefore result in unbearable stress.”

“That’s why he wears a special hearing aid,” Jupiter speculated.

“That’s what I’m assuming as well,” Bob said. “The device probably filters out the frequencies Yamada can’t stand.”

“But if he has this phonophobia, why is he doing music of all things?” wondered Pete. “Isn’t that the wrong profession?”

“Music in itself doesn’t have to have a negative effect on him,” Bob explained.

“Phonophobia often only relates to certain sounds. For example, he might be completely

relaxed listening to a symphony, but would break down at the sound of a car engine or siren. In fact, he could address such fears through cognitive behavioural therapy—as with other phobias.”

“Like when you’re afraid of spiders and then you’re asked to touch some?” Pete wondered.

“You got it!”

“Funny that the title of Yamada’s composition is named *Phonophobia*, of all things.” Pete leaned forward. “Could it be that he wants to overcome his fears with the piece? Then the concert at Terror Castle would be his own personal spider, so to speak!”

“Maybe someone else is also using the name to put pressure on Yamada,” Bob pondered, “for example, a competitor who wants to test how much Yamada can take?”

“Well, Yamada himself called his composition *Phonophobia*,” Jupiter replied. “It must definitely have a special meaning for him... but we shouldn’t forget our fake doctor either. Also, I will pay more attention to Mr Van der Wijk today!”

Before The Three Investigators could shadow anyone at all, however, there was a whole mountain of work to be done. Today, The Colourphonics would be bringing all their equipment to Terror Castle where the on-site rehearsal was to take place.

Chaos reigned in the Villa of the Arts. Lady Eunice almost spilled her coffee over the pile of programmes hot off the press; someone bumped into the pendulum; Yamada had a stress attack and had to calm down with some tea in the Blue Salon. He looked even paler and sicker than usual. Mr Van der Wijk, on the other hand, had not even appeared. All his equipment was already in the castle, so he seemed to see no reason to show up in Hollywood Heights that morning.

“Get out of the way!” Lucie Bland ordered The Three Investigators. Instead of dismantling her pendulum, she ran around the instrument like a dog herding sheep. “This is a sensitive instrument!”

“Don’t worry, ma’am,” Pete said quickly.

“We’ll leave it alone!” Bob also promised.

“The curse is going to hit us all!” Danielle Sherman told anyone who didn’t run away fast enough. “There will be a great calamity!”

Pete did not want to believe the woman. Nevertheless, he felt goose bumps on his arms. Much to Pete’s relief, Danielle Sherman simply left him standing there and went on to tell the next person about her fears. Shaking his head, the Second Investigator sauntered over to his friends.

“How is Chloe?” Jupiter asked as he helped Mr Shoomer get the laser harp ready for transportation.

“She’s better!” The musician looked very relieved. “She was discharged from the hospital yesterday, and is currently at home. She’ll be up and running tomorrow.”

“That’s good news! Then your daughter can come to the concert,” noted a young musician with a blonde pigtail who was sitting next to them, cleaning a metal tube that was probably an electronic version of a flute—although it did look more like a telescope.

“Let’s see,” said Mr Shoomer. His look revealed that he was worried. The Three Investigators could understand that only too well. After all, no one could foresee what would happen at the concert tomorrow. It went without saying that Mr Shoomer did not want his daughter to be there.

“They’ll have to cancel it!” hissed Pete finally as the boys took a short break in the tea kitchen. “It’s irresponsible to let these musicians play in front of a large audience.”

“That’s true, but who will believe us?” asked Bob. He sipped his tea cautiously. “The Colourphonics are a respected orchestra and the Villa of the Arts is a Los Angeles institution. No one is going to listen to three boys who claim that their music terrifies people. Surely that makes us no more credible than Danielle Sherman with her curse story!”

“Unless...” Jupiter said resolutely, “unless these three boys find out in time what the incidents are all about. If we have solid evidence, we will be heard!”

11. The Sound of Terror

Together with The Colourphonics, The Three Investigators drove to Black Canyon in the afternoon.

Mr Flint opened the door. This time the manager wore an immaculate white polo shirt and navy blue shorts that showed off his muscular brown calves. “Good to see you all here now! Mr Van der Wijk is already waiting in the projection room!”

The group of musicians and helpers followed Robert J Flint to the Echo Hall. As the many people passed through, their footsteps and voices echoed off the walls and it sounded as if a huge crowd was present. The individual words multiplied under the high ceiling and blended into an incomprehensible chorus. Yamada-san winced as if the sound caused him pain. For a moment, he even leaned against the wall for support.

Mr Shoomer, on the other hand, looked thrilled. “This is where I would love to set up my laser harp! Imagine the sounds you could create in this room!” He was so distracted that he almost collided with one of the old suits of armour that stood in the Echo Hall.

In the projection room, the bad-tempered Mr Van der Wijk was waiting for them. The artist was sitting on one of the audience seats, bobbing impatiently with one leg. At the other end of the room, several stagehands were busy setting up the chairs for the orchestra.

“I’ll show you all the room you can use as a dressing room,” Mr Flint offered. “We’ll also set up a small buffet there for you tomorrow, so you can fortify yourselves before the show. And there’s your technical team!” Flint pointed to three Asian men in black turtlenecks. They nodded curtly to The Colourphonics and then proceeded to set up the loudspeakers.

“Do you need amplification in this room?” Jupiter asked Mr Shoomer. “The acoustics are very good after all.”

Mr Shoomer smiled. “Need I remind you that we don’t have ordinary instruments? Some of them are electronically operated, others only work when coupled with certain devices. That’s why we need our technical assistants here.”

“Have you been working with this team for a long time?”

“Not really,” Mr Shoomer replied. “As far as the assistants are concerned, Mr Yamada engages them, and they come and go. In fact, I don’t even know the three of them personally.”

Jupiter looked around the room tensely. There were just too many suspects! Mr Van der Wijk was staring angrily at Yamada, who in turn had retreated to a gloomy corner. The three assistants stood hunched over a mixing desk, the ten Colourphonics musicians sprawled on the stage and Mr Flint had made himself comfortable in the audience area. They were all possible culprits—and at the moment, Lady Eunice and the fake doctor were not even there yet.

Normally, the First Investigator had a good nose when it came to narrowing down the circle of suspects. However, this time he was at a loss. In the stressed atmosphere, it was impossible to question individual people, nor could the boys check the instruments unseen.

Time was running out for them. The concert would take place the very next evening. By then, they should have unearthed the truth. However, at the moment, it seemed to be a

hopeless undertaking.

A short clap snapped Jupiter out of his thoughts. Yamada had stepped onto the stage. He was now standing in front of a microphone stand and cleared his throat. Once again, silence fell in the room. All eyes were on the little man.

“We will now begin the rehearsal,” Mr Yamada announced. “I ask everyone who is not part of the orchestra to leave the room.”

No one objected.

“I wonder what’s going to happen now?” pondered Pete as they stepped out of the projection room behind Mr Flint and the stagehands.

“We can easily check that.” Jupiter looked at his friends. “After all, we know a secret passage through which we can enter the projection room inconspicuously.”

The Three Investigators made their way into the old dining room. The furniture in the room were new, but the elaborate sideboard and carved wooden panelling on the walls remained the same as the last time they were in here.

On one side of the room was a big mirror. “Let’s hope that it can still open like before,” Jupiter said and he pushed one side of the mirror frame. True enough, it swung silently back like a door. Beyond it lay a dark passageway, leading deep into Terror Castle.

The First Investigator switched on his flashlight and immediately went into the passageway, followed by Bob.

Pete was still outside when he suddenly remembered something. “Hey Jupe!” he called out. “Do you know how to open this mirror door from where you are?”

“Nope,” Jupe replied. “I never found that out the last time.”

“You mean we are doomed to be locked in there again?” Pete exclaimed.

“Not really,” Jupe said calmly. “We should still be able to get out from the other end.”

“How can you be so sure?” Pete argued. “We might as well play it safe and block this door from locking.”

Jupe dug in his pockets, took out a roll of tape and threw it to Pete. “Use this tape to block the latch from locking... but hurry up!”

Pete did as suggested and tested that the taped latch worked before he entered the passageway. Inside, he carefully swung the door back to the closed position.

Jupiter shone the beam of light ahead. The passageway was dark and narrow as ever, but fortunately, it was still passable. The walls were rough stone, and there were no doorways, except at the far end.

The Three Investigators carried on walking with careful steps. Soon, the distorted music of The Colourphonics reached their ears. The weird, wheezing tones seemed to fill the narrow passageway, coming from all directions at once.

“Sounds kind of weird,” Pete said, “but it’s not really scary.”

“I actually quite like the music,” Bob said.

“Really?”

“We’ll come out from behind the velvet curtain,” Jupiter said quietly when they reached the door at the end of the passageway. “They won’t be able to see us from the stage, but we still have to be careful. The best thing is to sneak into the projection room one by one.”

“Whatever,” said Pete. “Go ahead then!”

Carefully, the First Investigator pushed open the door. Then The Three Investigators entered the projection room under the cover of the old curtain. The weird music was louder now. Side by side, they crept along a wall and round a corner.

At the back of the projection room, Mr Van der Wijk was sitting at a small gallery. He was wearing headphones and was completely focused on his graphics tablet, which was

placed on the desk in front of him. Pete peered to the stage and saw that bright colours and shapes were displayed on the screen. They were moving in time with the music. Blue plumes of smoke rose, mingled with green drops and red flecks and blurred into swirls of yellow and turquoise. Purple waves merged into black fields and were then fogged by silver swathes, which in turn turned into orange shadows.

The silhouettes of the musicians operating their instruments stood out in front of the screen. Mr Shoomer's laser harp was particularly impressive. The musician kept reaching into the fan of light to create sounds.

Pete ducked behind a chair. The music sounded strange, but it was not unpleasant. He liked the piece and it had a relaxing effect on him. All of a sudden, Terror Castle no longer seemed so threatening. He closed his eyes and felt himself in the sounds. Even without looking at the screen, he could perceive the colours—in his head. The last notes of the piece faded into a light green that reminded him of a peaceful forest clearing.

"So," he heard Yamada's voice afterwards. "We will begin with the harmonies for *Phonophobia*. I will then accompany you all on the pipe organ."

Chairs were moved and footsteps sounded, but no one spoke a word.

The piece began with dark sounds, but was not intrusive. Pete still felt relaxed. He looked over at his friends. Jupiter was hiding behind one of the large loudspeakers and Bob had remained at his place by the curtain.

The Second Investigator decided to crawl along the floor to get to the middle of the row of seats. From there, he would be able to watch Yamada at the pipe organ without being too easily spotted himself. He deftly moved forward as the music slowly swelled.

Pete felt himself getting goose bumps. His arms were tingling. The pleasant relaxation gave way to an unpleasant feeling. There was really no question of a peaceful forest clearing now.

To Pete, the music felt red—red like blood!

Bob sensed that something was wrong. The hairs on his forearms stood up. His muscles tensed as if they were getting ready to flee. He peered over at Jupiter. He also looked strained. It was not imagination—the music was doing something to them. Maybe it was the vibrations... or the instruments...

Bob gritted his teeth and looked over to the stage. The members of The Colourphonics were completely absorbed in their playing. Full of fervour, Chloe's father kept reaching into his laser harp; the woman with the electronic flute had her eyes closed while playing; and the unsympathetic blonde was in deep harmony with her pendulium.

All the musicians wore their special headphones—and they sat elevated. The orchestral music would not only be transmitted directly from the stage to the audience, but also from the numerous loudspeakers that were positioned in various places around the hall.

From his position, Bob could not see Yamada. Too bad he didn't have the pipe organ in view! So far, the instrument had not been used, but it would certainly not be long before one of the musicians played on it.

Bob peered over at Jupiter once more, and then glanced across the rows of seats. Pete had disappeared somewhere at the back of the hall. Bob hoped he could take the music well. After all, the Second Investigator was right between the big loudspeakers!

Pete felt as if he were in a confined space where the air was slowly getting thinner and thinner. He breathed faster. Sweat appeared on his forehead. Then he noticed that he felt dizzy. He had to get out of the hall—immediately!

The pendulum was now droning ominously. Pete felt sick. He suppressed the urge to vomit. Instead, he tried to concentrate on his goal. He had to get to the velvet curtain! That was where the exit was, and where Bob was. All he had to do was crawl straight ahead along the carpet.

Wild plays of colour twitched before his eyes. He saw green and red flashes flare up. The dizziness was so strong by now that he had difficulty keeping his direction. With every movement, the feeling of anxiety turned more and more into fear. He could hardly feel the ground anymore.

"Pete?" Someone reached for him. Who it was, he didn't care at all. He needed air!

"I got him!" The voice came through a disturbing hiss to him.

"Get out!" he heard a second voice, now as if through cotton wool. Hands shoved him forward, followed by tugging and more pushing. Suddenly he found himself in complete darkness.

"We're in the secret passageway!"

"I feel sick," muttered the Second Investigator.

"Hold on!"

"I'm going to throw up!"

"Not here!"

"Outside!"

Pete stumbled disoriented through the darkness. He had lost all sense of time and space. A deep roar sounded in his head and a wave of nausea overcame him. Again he saw the blood-red colour before his inner eye.

"The pipe organ!" someone shouted next to him.

"Faster, Bob!" That had to be Jupiter.

"Now I'm getting uncomfortable too."

"Don't stop! Do not stop under any circumstances!"

A door opened and Pete was pushed into a lighted room. It was fortunate that Pete took the precaution to tape the latch of the mirror door, and now they were back in the dining room.

Jupe and Bob did not stop, however, but hurriedly helped Pete to the large, floor-to-ceiling French windows that led out onto the terrace.

Bob yanked open one of the casements. "Let's get out of here!"

Pete staggered to a small wall and threw up in a bush. Then he took a deep breath. The cool evening air did him good.

"You all right?" Bob had stepped next to him and was looking at him worriedly.

"I want to get out of here!" Pete burst out. He really wanted to. Once again he had the urgent need to get as far as possible away from Terror Castle.

With a worried expression, Bob handed Pete a handkerchief. Only now did Pete realize that he was bleeding from the nose. Red spots were spreading on his T-shirt.

"As red as the music!" he said, startled.

"Like the music?" Bob enquired.

"Yes, it was ghastly!"

Jupiter stared up at the gloomy façade of the castle to the battlements above which a narrow crescent moon had risen. "At least we now have proof that Chloe and Raymondo Kappelhoff did not make up the strange events."

"It was scary," Bob admitted, "like the music was suddenly in my head."

"I felt the same way," Jupe said, "but we both experienced it nowhere near as strongly as Pete."

“After all, we are not synaesthetes,” Bob said, “and we were on the edge of the hall.”

“I think the position of the loudspeakers has a big impact on the effect of the music,” Jupiter said.

“I want to get out of here!” Pete repeated.

“Then I’ll just go in and tell Mr Flint,” the First Investigator decided. “I’ll just say you had a little accident.”

Pete lowered himself onto the small wall that surrounded the terrace. “Please be quick.”

12. The Hazard Meter

Pete woke up drenched in sweat. With trembling fingers, he felt for the lamp on his bedside table. His head was pounding and his ears were ringing. He wondered if he would have been better off staying the night in hospital.

Jupiter and Bob had driven him to Rocky Beach Memorial Hospital right after the terrible rehearsal in Black Canyon. He had been examined but had refused to remain there.

The silence in his room seemed unnatural to him. It pressed on his ears. At the same time, an echo of *Phonophobia* seemed to reverberate through his head. Just the memory of it was enough to make him feel slightly nauseous.

Breathing heavily, he let himself sink back onto his pillow. He stared at the ceiling. What was wrong with this piece of music? Was it perhaps cursed after all—as Danielle Sherman claimed? Did it have magical powers? Or was the instruments following ancient spells or forces of evil, terrifying anyone who listened to them without protection?

In this particular case, Pete did not believe that curses and supernatural powers were in play, but at such moments—in the middle of the night—doubts did come to him. What he had experienced had clearly been supernatural!

In the morning, the alarm clock did not manage to make Pete get up. Only when the rubbish trucks rolled noisily along the road did the tired Second Investigator manage to open his eyes. He felt as if he had been knocked out. *Phonophobia* was in his bones.

When he came into the kitchen after a brief wash, his parents were already sitting down at breakfast.

“Goodness, what’s the matter with you?” asked Mrs Crenshaw anxiously. “You’re not going to get sick, are you?”

“Thank goodness you’re on holiday.” Mr Crenshaw peered out from behind his newspaper. “Best to just lie down again.”

“Do you have a fever?” Mrs Crenshaw put down the coffee pot and felt Pete’s forehead.

“I’ll be all right,” said the Second Investigator wanly. He sat down at the table. “I just had a busy day yesterday. Jupe, Bob and I are working for a Hollywood orchestra at the moment. They’re playing at Black Canyon tonight.”

“The Colourphonics?” asked Mr Crenshaw casually.

Pete looked up from the pancake he was about to drizzle with syrup. “How do you know?”

“It’s in the papers. When a bunch of wacky musicians put on a crazy show in front of a select audience and then it takes place in the castle of a former movie star, it’s worth an article, right?”

“Probably,” Pete said.

Mr Crenshaw put the paper aside. “The tickets are supposed to be incredibly expensive, but part of the proceeds go to hearing-impaired children.”

“I didn’t know that,” Pete admitted. “Can I cut out the article when you’ve read the paper? I’d like to show it to Jupe and Bob.”

“No problem.”

“But now it’s time to eat properly!” said Mrs Crenshaw reprovingly.

Although he wasn’t very hungry for once, Pete didn’t object. In his mind, however, he had long since moved on from pancakes with maple syrup to The Colourphonics.

Half an hour later, Pete rode his bike to the salvage yard. Gradually he felt better again. The short ride through the fresh morning air finally woke him up, and when he arrived at The Jones Salvage Yard, he was in a good mood again.

The yard was empty, and there was no one at the outdoor workshop either. He found his friends on the verandah of the Jones family home. The two of them were not alone. Sitting with them was Chloe.

“Aunt Mathilda has made waffles!” Jupiter greeted him with a gesture to the richly set garden table that stood in the middle of the verandah.

“I just ate five pancakes,” Pete replied. “With syrup! I’m full for now!”

“Waffles are yummy!” Chloe said as she put one on her plate.

“A wonderful day, isn’t it?” Uncle Titus stepped onto the verandah with swinging steps. He looked round with a broad smile and then stroked his black moustache briskly. “Well then, the work awaits! I wish you a good appetite.” In a good mood, he went down the steps and trudged away to the salvage yard.

“Did Aunt Mathilda forgive him for buying the barrel organs?” Pete asked.

“Not quite yet,” Jupiter replied, “but Uncle Titus has thought of something. It’s top secret, but I think he wants to surprise Aunt Mathilda.”

“Hopefully it has nothing to do with some other junk,” Bob said.

“I rather think he wants to take her to the opera,” Jupiter said as he sprinkled icing sugar on his waffle. “There’s supposed to be a particularly high-profile production of *Madame Butterfly* in Los Angeles right now. They did a piece about it on television yesterday. I’m sure Aunt Mathilda would like that.”

“So the opera was featured on television, and now The Colourphonics made it into the newspaper!” Pete put the folded clipping next to the plate with the waffles.

“Hey, this is from the competition!” said Bob.

“Not everyone reads the *Los Angeles Times*, Bob,” Pete replied. “*Rocky Beach Today* is much better when it comes to local events.”

“But Terror Castle is not even in the area,” Bob countered.

Meanwhile, Jupiter had unfolded the article. Frowning, he read it. “The programme didn’t say that part of the proceeds would go to charity.”

“Yes, it did,” Bob recalled. “On the back, it mentioned an association for hearing-impaired children.”

“It’s for a good cause,” Chloe confirmed. “The Colourphonics have done this before. Besides, high-profile guests also come to charity events.”

“Is there a guest list?” Jupiter immediately wanted to know.

“There is such a file in Lady Eunice’s computer,” Bob said, “but I didn’t look at it closely. With all the work I’ve been doing, I haven’t got round to it. But—”

Before Bob could speak further, a man stepped up to them. It was Mr Kappelhoff. Today he looked much healthier than the last time he had been here.

Jupiter greeted the movie director and invited him to join them at the table. “I’ve asked Mr Kappelhoff to come over. He’s very interested in the progress of our investigation and may be able to give us some more helpful information.”

Mr Kappelhoff sat down and Jupiter summarized the events of the last few days. The movie director listened attentively. When Jupiter reported on the rehearsal at Terror Castle, he was taken aback. “Yamada played a pipe organ?”

“Yes,” Jupiter confirmed. “There is a pipe organ in the projection room. It was recently restored.”

“Yamada has never written a piece for a classical organ before,” said Kappelhoff, puzzled. “At the rehearsal I experienced, some kind of harmonium was used. If I remember correctly, my discomfort got stronger when the part for this instrument came on.”

Kappelhoff was not the only one wondering about the pipe organ. Chloe also looked thoughtful. “A pipe organ is one of those things in a church, isn’t it? I think it’s much too traditional for The Colourphonics.”

“But yesterday Yamada did play the pipe organ,” Pete said insistently. He certainly hadn’t dreamed up those horrible sounds. Besides, he had seen Yamada at the pipe organ.

“Fortunately, we were no longer in the hall when it started... but we still felt something,” Bob recalled. “I was panicking... with heart palpitations—real heart palpitations!”

“I can see at least two issues at play here,” Jupe said. “Firstly, it’s about the range of frequencies humans can hear. Under certain circumstances, sounds outside the audible limit can have a direct effect on the human nervous system.”

“You mentioned infrasound the other day,” Kappelhoff interjected.

“Yes,” Jupe continued. “Chloe’s dad told me that the musicians’ headphones are customized to block out certain frequencies. During a performance, sounds outside the audible limit could be produced by one or more of those electronic instruments. Such vibrations could make a person feel nervous, anxious and fearful.”

“However, none of the musicians are affected since they have their headphones on,” Bob added.

“Exactly,” Jupe agreed. “Secondly, things get more complicated since the concert will be held at Terror Castle... Mr Kappelhoff, several years ago, we solved a case there, and it was suspected that the pipe organ music played a part in causing fear among people who ventured into the castle. Although we were never told how it was done, it is my guess that some pipes of the organ were made to emit deep vibrations that cannot be heard, but are instead felt by the body’s nervous system. Again it is about sounds outside the audible limit.”

“It was as if the music was a living predator!” added Pete. “You are welcome to suspect the artist Van der Wijk, or Lady Eunice, but I am of the opinion that it is Yamada himself. He didn’t write a piece of music, he created a sonic weapon!”

“From the rehearsal, we know that Yamada will be playing the pipe organ,” Bob added. “For all we know, he could even have rigged the organ to do more harm.”

Mr Kappelhoff looked concerned. “But why should Mr Yamada do that? His career is on the rise, he’s getting the opportunity to present his own compositions and may soon be playing in the biggest and most famous music halls in the world—and of course in my movie!”

“If something happened to the audience tonight, it would be a disaster for The Colourphonics!” Chloe agreed with him.

“By the way, we were observed by a woman in the Black Canyon,” Bob reported. “We only saw her from a distance, but it could be the fake doctor. Her role is still unclear.”

“Jupiter described to me the strange lady,” the director said, “but I have never seen her before.”

“This woman is really a phantom,” Pete remarked.

“Normally I would pay more attention to her, but the fact is that we only have a few hours left to shed light on it,” Jupiter said. “We have this morning off. We’ll use that time to have a look around Black Canyon. We can talk to Mr Flint and ask him to show us the pipe organ. If something has been modified on the instrument, we might be able to spot that.”

Bob agreed with him. “—And if all that doesn’t help, then we have to try to prevent the concert from taking place tonight.”

“Jupiter, I am extremely uncomfortable sending you to the castle again!” said Kappelhoff. “Under no circumstances will I go into the projection room myself. It’s too dangerous for me.”

“Me too,” Chloe admitted.

“We will take special precautions this time,” Jupiter explained.

“Earmuffs?” asked Kappelhoff.

“I have spent the last few days intensively studying measurement procedures in the acoustic field.” A triumphant grin spread across Jupiter’s round face. “I constructed something new from a few existing devices!” He placed a small box on the table.

“So you’ve been tinkering again?” Pete bent over to get a better look as his friend opened the box.

Inside was something that remotely resembled a tiny radio. It had a small display, several switches and a semi-circular protrusion on the top that looked like a microphone. Jupiter switched the device on. Colourful bars briefly flashed on the display. Then he took a few wristbands out of the box.

“I call this the hazard meter,” Jupe explained. “The wristbands are slightly modified heart rate monitors. They measure the vital signs of the body and send them to the device. It evaluates the measurement and reflects the stress intensity of the wristband wearers—and this will be shown by the number of green, yellow and red bars on the display.”

“And what good is that?” asked Pete sceptically.

“When the stress intensity approaches danger level, then we know we have to leave the sphere of influence of the music as soon as possible.”

Mr Kappelhoff was thrilled. “That’s brilliant, Jupiter! That’s how you can tell when it’s really dangerous!”

“True,” Chloe said appreciatively, “so we also know that it’s not just psychological symptoms.”

“If the device goes off, we could pull the fire alarm in the projection room in time,” Bob said. “Since there have been official performances at Terror Castle, the safety precautions have been improved. There are not only smoke detectors, but also a warning system.”

“Very good, then nothing can happen to the audience today,” the director stated with satisfaction.

However, Jupiter looked thoughtful. “We cannot be certain as we don’t know what kind of game will be played. In any case, we should not underestimate our opponents.”

13. The Guest List

After the meeting with Chloe and Mr Kappelhoff, The Three Investigators drove directly to Black Canyon. Jupiter tugged the old bell pull at the main entrance and Mr Flint, the manager of Terror Castle, opened the door.

“What are you doing here now?” he asked.

“We have reason to believe that someone may have tampered with the pipe organ,” Jupiter said.

“The pipe organ?” Mr Flint frowned. “What for?”

“We can’t say for sure at the moment.”

“The instrument has been restored by experts. It works perfectly. Yamada-san played an excellent solo on it last night after the rehearsal. After that, the room was locked and the alarms were switched on. You can be sure that no one was at the pipe organ.”

“But we would like to—” Jupiter began.

However, the manager did not let him finish. “There is an important concert here tonight and I have my hands full. The last thing I need is three teenagers running around the castle and messing with the instruments. Do you know what would happen if you touch, move or even break something?”

“We could, after all—”

“Nothing doing!” Mr Flint said. “Mr Yamada is in the projection room right now and doesn’t want to be disturbed! Please come back at the appointed time and help set up.”

With these words, he slammed the heavy door in their faces.

Pete looked at his friends sullenly. “Well, that was anything but successful.”

“Shall we try to sneak inside?” Bob asked.

Jupiter thought for a moment. “It should be easy for us to get into the castle. However, we can’t examine the pipe organ while Yamada is playing it. We can only hope that there will be enough time later to inspect the instrument more closely.”

“So what do we do now?”

“We’re going to Hollywood Heights to talk to Lady Eunice. I’d love to see the guest list.”

Although it was not a long way as the crow flies from Terror Castle to the Villa of the Arts, the drive through the canyons and over the winding mountain roads took quite a while. In addition, The Three Investigators got caught in a traffic jam shortly before their destination so they arrived later than expected.

Pete looked impatiently at his watch. “We have to be back at the castle in two hours!”

That was the first thing Lady Eunice said to them: “You have to be at the castle in two hours! You are needed for the preparations!”

“Two hours is plenty of time, ma’am,” Jupiter replied calmly. “There is nothing to do there yet. We have just spoken to Mr Flint. The caterers aren’t there yet either and the cloakroom attendants won’t arrive until later. We are here to get a printout of the guest list. Mr Flint can’t find his list.”

“I emailed it to him, didn’t I?”

“The Internet has been down more often in the Black Canyon lately,” Jupiter lied. “I think it’s best if we just print out the list and take it to the castle.”

“Good idea, come along!” Lady Eunice led The Three Investigators into her office. There was even more chaos there than the day before.

“Once this concert is over, I’m going to take a holiday!” She sighed. Then she sat down on her office chair, grabbed the mouse and clicked around on the screen. “Now where is the guest list?”

“Surely important music professionals come to such an event, don’t they?” asked Jupiter in a pointedly casual manner.

“You bet!” confirmed Lady Eunice, who was still looking for the document. “We’ve invited leading musicians, and there will also be a few stars from Hollywood. Yamada has some fans among the movie-makers.” She clicked on. “—But that’s not all! We’re even expecting a few high-ranking people from politics and business who are in Los Angeles right now for a convention.”

“Almost sounds like there are no tickets for normal people,” Bob remarked.

Lady Eunice had now finally found the list. “At this particular concert, only a handful…”

With a whirring sound, the printer began to move. Slowly, a sheet of paper slid out of the tray.

“See that you eat something. I’m sure you won’t have time later. It’s going to be a long night and there’s a lot to do!” Lady Eunice smiled, took the paper and held it out to Bob. “I’ll see you later at the castle!”

“My goodness!” Pete exclaimed when they were stuck in traffic again on their way back to Terror Castle. “There are no half-measures with this guest list!”

He handed the printout to Jupiter. “We’re definitely going to meet some real stars tonight!” He grinned. “—Even that super pretty agent from *Kill Me Twice III*!”

“I don’t know who she is. I haven’t seen the movie,” Bob said. He stared in frustration at the traffic jam in front of him. “Right now it doesn’t look like we’ll ever get to the castle in time!”

“We have to get there by hook or by crook,” Jupiter said sternly. “What I find more important is the list of political guests.”

“Well, they’re not that important,” Pete commented. “It’s not like the president of the United States is coming.”

“Instead, officials from the Department of Defence have been invited,” Jupe said.

“Fine, then we don’t have to worry about it!” Pete looked pleased. “With a crowd like that, I’m sure bodyguards and maybe even the police will be there to provide security.”

“That may be so,” Jupiter said, “but even then, if they search the castle for bombs beforehand, they won’t find anything. You’ve already said it, Pete—the music itself is a sonic weapon!”

Despite the heavy traffic, they arrived at the Black Canyon just in time. Now there were already several cars in the car park. Mr Flint was there, and when he saw Bob’s car, he called out: “This car park is for guests only!” He then asked Bob to drive down a small driveway to behind the castle where there was a car park for staff. “Please speed up a bit. The guests are about to roll in here!”

Bob did as he was told. In the staff car park, they saw the van of a catering company and the two minibuses that had been used to bring The Colourphonics musicians here.

The Three Investigators quickly went into the castle through the back entrance. The building was unusually busy. Lights were on, people in white aprons were setting up tables, musicians were walking around, coat racks were being pushed around, programme booklets were being distributed and spotlights were being aimed.

"That's the way I like it," Pete said as he set up a hand truck with crates of drinks next to an improvised bar. "With this hustle and bustle, all the ghosts are guaranteed to disappear into the far corners of the castle."

"Ghosts!" Bob snorted, but then had to grin. He opened a box of champagne glasses and placed them on the starched white tablecloth.

Jupiter, meanwhile, looked around uneasily. "It's all well and good that we're busy with work, but our real job is still investigating the *Phonophobia* case!"

"I'll be done with the drinks in a minute," Pete said. "After that I can go to the projection room. With a bit of luck, I can have a closer look at the pipe organ."

"I'll go there with you!" Jupiter decided.

"And me too!" Bob hurried to put the last glasses in their place and then shoved the empty box under the table.

"Look at the clock!" said Pete. "The first guests are sure to arrive soon. There are always a few people who arrive far too punctually."

"Well, let's get going!" Jupiter was about to go into the projection room with his two friends when he was held back.

Mr Flint looked at him with a stern face. "We need someone to check the invitation cards at the entrance. Originally that Cleo Shuman was supposed to do it, but she didn't show up."

"You mean Chloe Shoomer?"

"It doesn't matter what her name is. I need someone to take care of this job right now." Flint firmly directed the First Investigator away from his friends. They looked after him sadly.

"Now what?" Pete finally asked.

"Now we'll take a look at the pipe organ," Bob decided. "We'll manage that without Jupe."

They entered the semi-dark projection room where Mr Van der Wijk was fiddling on his graphics tablet. Colourful strokes and blobs appeared on the screen above the stage. Some musicians were busy with their instruments, but there was no sign of Yamada.

"The pipe organ seems to be normal," Pete murmured.

"You can't see that from here." Bob pretended to look around between the rows of chairs. "Mr Flint doesn't want any rubbish lying around here!" he said loudly.

Pete responded. "I'll take a look at that area. Looks like someone dropped a gum wrapper there!"

The musicians paid no attention to the boys, who seemed to be dutifully searching for rubbish.

Inconspicuously, with his eyes on the ground, Pete approached the pipe organ. Then a long shadow fell on the Second Investigator.

14. Jupiter Gets a Surprise

Pete winced. Right in front of him stood Lucie Bland, the unsympathetic musician who played the pendulium.

“What are you doing here?” she asked sharply.

“I... I’m supposed to be looking for rubbish.”

“Nonsense! The room has been thoroughly cleaned by a cleaner earlier!”

Pete thought about it in a flash. “Well, confidentially speaking, I was sent by Mr Flint. He saw a man at the pipe organ earlier.”

“A man?”

“Yes,” Pete lied. He hoped he wasn’t blushing as he did so. “Mr Flint has never seen him before, and that’s why he asked me to see if everything was all right.”

“You?”

“Why not?”

“What do you know about pipe organs?”

“Quite a lot... otherwise I wouldn’t be doing this job at the Villa of the Arts. I definitely want to study music after school.”

“See that you take care of the guests, and let the musical instruments be our concern. I’ll go and check on the pipe organ with a colleague in a minute.”

Pete peered around the burgundy brocade curtain that covered the side of the pipe organ. “But I’m supposed to check! What if Mr Flint gets mad at me?”

He took a quick look at the musical instrument and spotted several cables and a square black box with small lights and switches. In truth, the Second Investigator had never bothered with pipe organs, but as far as he could remember, a similar organ in the church at Rocky Beach had no cables and no black boxes with flashing lights. Now he also noticed two silver attachments mounted on the largest pipes. In the semi-darkness of the projection room, he would not have been able to see this from a distance. Was this a method of improving the sound or was it part of the sonic weapon?

“Bob could be right,” Pete thought to himself. “Yamada could have rigged the pipe organ up to cause more harm!” In any case, Pete tried to remember everything exactly.

However, Miss Bland was getting impatient. “That’s enough! You’re holding everything up here.”

“It’s all right, ma’am!” Pete raised his hands placatingly. “I’m going.”

Jupiter was sitting at an antique mahogany table in the entrance hall and was in a bad mood.

“I don’t really like this music,” an elderly gentleman in a dinner jacket said to him.

The First Investigator had just checked his card, but the man didn’t think of moving on. As long as there were no guests waiting behind him, he seemed perfectly content to express his opinion to Jupiter.

“They used to have real concerts in Hollywood. You should have experienced that. The standard of the events was unsurpassed,” the man commented.

“Yes, I can imagine that,” the First Investigator said and looked out of the entrance to the driveway. Darkness was already descending like a veil over the canyon. Now the first bats

were also on the move. He could see them buzzing over the forecourt as small black shadows.

“The performers of ‘The Colourphonies’ are basically not real musicians at all,” the man continued his rant.

“It’s The Colourphonics, sir,” Jupiter corrected him.

“Whatever,” the man said. “A pianist is a musician and so is a violinist, but who plays a ‘pandemonium’?”

“They call it a ‘pendulium’,” Jupiter corrected him again.

“It doesn’t matter to me what they call it,” the man scowled at him. “Are you going to keep interrupting me?”

“No, sir,” Jupiter replied meekly, but he knew that there would be a real pandemonium if the concert was not stopped.

“I suppose you find the whole circus here interesting,” the man continued unperturbed. “Maybe you’re also one of those uncultured people who think this is art.”

“Art is in the eye of the beholder,” Jupiter replied. He looked out again. Just then a magnificent car drove up the driveway. Jupiter blinked.

Meanwhile, the man in the dinner jacket took another step towards the mahogany table. “I find it outrageous that such a high price was charged for the tickets. It’s not justified considering the quality.”

Now it was getting too much for Jupiter. “Then why did you buy a ticket in the first place?”

“This is an outrageous impertinence! I’m going to complain about you to your superior!” With these words, the man stomped away.

Jupiter snorted contemptuously, then stared out again. The car had caught his attention. It looked all too familiar to the First Investigator. Now that it turned into the car park directly in front of the entrance, there was no longer any doubt. It was an antique Rolls-Royce with gold trimmings—the luxury car from Rent-’n-Ride Auto Agency!

A few years ago, Jupiter had taken part in the car rental company’s competition and won the use of the very same luxury car for thirty days—complete with an English chauffeur. Some time later, a grateful and rather wealthy client of The Three Investigators had arranged for the boys to use the car whenever they wanted. Ever since Bob and Pete had their own cars, this need was much less often. However over the years, Worthington, the chauffeur, was something of a friend to The Three Investigators and, in a way, even an honorary member of their investigation team.

Jupe looked at the noble car. He knew that the Rolls-Royce was occasionally rented by Hollywood stars. Presumably one of the invited actors had arrived in it.

Before he could think about it further, Jupiter was pulled out of his thoughts by the elderly gentleman in the dinner jacket. He had returned with Mr Flint in tow. His face was the colour of an overripe tomato.

Mr Flint, on the other hand, looked pale and stressed despite his Californian summer tan. “What’s the matter with you?” he reprimanded the First Investigator.

“What’s wrong?” Jupiter played the clueless.

“There you see it! He gets cheeky right away!” The elderly man looked as if he wanted to get at Jupiter.

“This gentleman has complained about you!” said Flint sternly.

“I’m very sorry about that, sir,” Jupiter lied in his most well-behaved tone. He forced himself to smile conciliatorily. “There must have been a misunderstanding in communication. I apologize profusely.”

The elderly man mumbled something intelligible under his breath, and Mr Flint gruffly said: "That's all right then." The two of them turned and left.

As they walked away, Jupiter could still hear the man talking to Flint: "I don't really like this music. There used to be real concerts in Hollywood. You should have experienced that, young man. The standard of the events was unsurpassed."

Suddenly, the guests seemed to come in a whole sweep. Jupiter checked ten cards, including the card of an extremely attractive woman he had recently seen in a movie magazine. He wondered if she was the actress from *Kill Me Twice III*. Behind her, an old couple came up the stairs. They exchanged a few friendly words with Jupiter and then went on their way.

Then came another couple. The woman was strongly built and wore an azure dress with a wide stole. The man, on the other hand, was slender and wore a somewhat old-fashioned suit with a bow tie. The most striking thing about him was the black moustache that completely dominated his face. The First Investigator's polite smile froze.

"Jupe!" Aunt Mathilda greeted him. "Isn't it great? Your uncle surprised me with tickets for this concert today!"

"You told me you were working for these Colourphonics," Uncle Titus said with a proud look. "You also left the programme on the kitchen table and that's when I got the idea to take your aunt out for something really fanciful. I even hired your Rolls-Royce with the chauffeur!"

"Uh... but..." Jupiter stammered in perplexity, "where did you get tickets so quickly?"

Aunt Mathilda looked at her husband admiringly. He leaned forward a little and said softly: "A music expert from our neighbourhood traded them for two barrel organs. He was quite taken with the beauties. Besides, he couldn't have come here anyway because his mother-in-law is celebrating her birthday today and the—"

"We're going to the bar first!" Aunt Mathilda interrupted him.

"A good idea, Mathilda!"

"But you can't go in there!" Jupiter started when his uncle and aunt wanted to leave.

"Jupe, what is this nonsense?"

"It's too—" He had meant to say 'dangerous' but at that moment, of all times, Mr Flint came up to them.

"Is the boy causing trouble?" he asked Mr and Mrs Jones. His tone betrayed that he was extremely displeased.

"No, everything is fine," Uncle Titus assured him good-humouredly. "We're just going to get some champagne."

Before Jupiter could stop them, they had already mingled with the other guests.

Flint looked sternly at Jupiter once more. Perhaps he would have said something else if a young woman with waist-length blonde curls had not approached the desk at that very moment. She undoubtedly looked very pretty in her green evening dress.

Flint cleared his throat. "I have to get back to work."

Jupiter only nodded. He examined the woman closely. Could she be the fake doctor who questioned Chloe at the hospital? And was she perhaps also the nobly dressed lady they had seen at the foyer of the Villa of the Arts? From the stature, that was quite possible... and the long hair could very well be a wig.

"Hey, how's it going?" Chloe Shoomer had joined Jupiter at the table.

"What are you doing here?" Startled, he looked at her. She had tied her red hair up and put on a dress, also red, which looked a little unflattering. More than ever, she reminded him of a strawberry.

"I'm not going to listen to the concert, but I wanted to come here anyway. After all, my father is in there!" Then she grinned broadly and nodded her head in the direction of the young woman in the green dress, who was now standing in front of them.

The blonde smiled curtly at the First Investigator, then reached into a plain black handbag and dug out her ticket. Jupiter was focussed on her face. What did this woman look like with brown hair and glasses? The resemblance to the fake doctor was undeniable, but when the First Investigator wanted to make sure again, she had already turned away, staggering on high heels.

"She is mighty suspicious!" Jupiter pressed out quietly between his teeth.

"What's so suspicious about her?" Chloe eyed the blonde from behind.

"That was the doctor from your hospital! I'm almost sure of it!" whispered Jupiter.

The smile abruptly disappeared from Chloe's face. "Really?"

"Same height and build, matching nose shape and eye colour..."

"Then you have to go after her!"

Jupiter laughed bitterly. "I can't leave here!"

"Yes, you can!" said Chloe firmly. "Move aside! I would have done this job anyway." Already she was pushing him ungently off the stool. "Follow her! I'll check the cards."

Jupiter did not linger long. For one thing, the next guests were already arriving and for another, there was a whole series of important things for the First Investigator to do—he had to follow the fake doctor, warn Aunt Mathilda and Uncle Titus, and find Pete and Bob.

Tensed, he hurried to the Echo Hall. There was no sign of the woman in the green dress. Jupiter's uncle and aunt were not in sight either.

"Everything all right?" Bob asked as he and Pete approached Jupiter from behind.

"No, not at all!" The First Investigator looked at his friends worriedly. "The concert is about to start and we don't have anything under control here right now!" He hurriedly reported what had happened.

"Your aunt and uncle have probably already gone into the projection room," Bob said, "and I just saw Yamada and Flint going into the office."

"That's right," Pete now also said. "It looked like they were arguing about something."

"And as long as they're arguing in the office, the concert can't start!"

"Come on, we should try to eavesdrop on the conversation. Maybe it's about *Phonophobia*!" Already Jupiter was on his way.

The office was on the ground floor. If they walked across the large terrace, they could sneak up to one of the windows unnoticed. The castle had old-fashioned windows with thin panes and the First Investigator hoped that he could hear what was being said from outside. On such a warm evening, Flint might even have opened one of the windows.

One after the other, The Three Investigators ran out past Chloe. Then they slowed their pace and ducked. The terrace lay silent in the darkness. In any case, they had to make sure that nobody saw them lurking around the outside of the castle.

Step by step, they crept closer to the two windows of the office. Indeed, angry voices could now be heard, but individual words were difficult to make out.

"... Problem... more money... not enough!" This apparently came from Flint.

An angry torrent of incomprehensible words followed—apparently from Yamada.

"My men... take care of her."

"... Can't... time... totally unprofessional!"

"... But... no danger..."

Jupiter crept another step closer to the window. If they only understood half of what was being said, it was of little use to them.

However, he had barely taken another step when the three boys were bathed in a bright glow of light. The First Investigator could have slapped himself. He had overlooked the motion detector that was mounted above the terrace.

15. Yamada's Story

With one leap, the manager of Terror Castle was at the window and tore it open.

Jupiter, Pete and Bob turned on their heels without hesitation. Blinded by the light, they wanted to escape as quickly as possible into the safe darkness. However Pete, of all people, slipped on the path. He bumped into Bob and both fell. At the same time, without braking, Jupiter ran into them.

"I want to talk to you!" Flint called out coldly. "Come along!"

Jupiter briefly considered whether running away made sense, but then he saw the silhouettes of three men approaching by the side of the castle. The men were not exactly tall, but looked athletic. As they came closer, Jupiter noticed that it was the three Asian assistants.

"These are the Ryu brothers, our three dragons!" said Flint. "They can get very uncomfortable if you tease them."

"We could shout," Jupe said. "After all, there are a lot of people here..."

"—To whom I can then report that you tried to break into my office," Flint replied. "Now, come on. I just want to talk to you."

Jupiter regretted their hasty attempt to flee. He was never at a loss for the right words when it came to a good excuse. However, this way, they had made themselves suspicious.

The dragon brothers shoved the three boys towards one of the many French windows facing out to the terrace. One of the windows was open like a door, through which the three of them were led back into the castle, and then straight to Flint's office.

"Is this your card?" asked Flint after one of the dragon brothers had closed the office door. In his hand, he held the business card of The Three Investigators. "We found it on the floor in the projection room yesterday."

Pete blushed. He remembered how he had crawled between the rows of seats with the last of his strength, and with the terrible sounds of *Phonophobia* in his head. He must have lost the card in the process.

"Denial is pointless!" Yamada now also spoke up. It was the first time he had addressed The Three Investigators directly. His face betrayed no nervousness.

Pete had the feeling that he was literally captivated by the man's gaze. Bob also felt uncomfortable.

Flint looked nervously at his watch. "Mr Yamada, you have to go on stage. The concert will start in a few minutes."

"It doesn't start without me," Yamada said, "and I can afford to keep my audience waiting a while longer."

"Let us go! We are not investigating any case here," Jupiter lied in a firm voice. "We are here to assist The Colourphonics."

"Sure!" one of the dragon brothers spoke up. "I heard you talking in the corridor yesterday."

"You must have us confused," Jupiter argued. "After all, we've never seen you here before either."

"The dragons stay in the background," Flint said. "It's their job not to be seen."

"And why didn't you confront us earlier?" Jupe wanted to know.

“We don’t feel threatened by three boys snooping around,” Flint replied. “It’s merely annoying. Besides, we haven’t let you out of our sight all this time.”

Jupiter didn’t let it show, but he was deeply wounded in his investigator honour. A lot had really gone wrong with this case.

Flint waved to the brothers. “Now we’ll take you to the cellar for the time being. I’m afraid you’ll have to miss the concert.”

“What a pity, when I am looking forward to being terrified by the music,” Jupiter said with dripping irony in his voice.

“You will definitely have the pleasure of a special performance later.” Now a bitter glare entered Yamada’s eyes. “How about an organ solo just for the three of you?”

“You’re crazy!” growled Pete.

“Crazy?” echoed Yamada. All composure was now gone from his face. “Do you know what it’s like to hear colours? How it feels when you can suddenly taste music? When everything becomes a huge sensation? When Mozart’s *Coronation Mass* almost makes you drunk because you can feel the taste of red wine on your tongue? When a Picasso suddenly clinks like glass?”

“Now don’t exaggerate!” Pete himself was surprised by his courage to criticise the conductor so openly. “You just experience music a little differently. You are not the only one! Many people have synaesthesia and get on well with it.”

“Synaesthesia!” Yamada almost shouted now. “What a beautiful word! But you don’t even know what it means. The world is different. It sounds, it tastes, it glows, where for others it is only silent, bland or dark. That may sound beautiful and exciting to you, but if you can’t escape it, it’s cruel!”

“It’s bearable,” Pete said, “and believe me, I know what I’m talking about.”

Yamada sat down. “I want to tell you a story.”

“Sir!” said Flint impatiently. “The concert!”

“As I said, the concert starts when I’m ready. I alone make the rules here, understand?” Yamada turned back to The Three Investigators. “So now listen to the story of a father and his three sons:

“Once upon a time there was a father. He was very strict and had high demands on his sons. The brothers competed for his favour. One was a gifted athlete—he ran faster than the wind and had soon achieved all that was possible in competition. The other had a sharp mind and an analytical eye and soon constructed tall towers and fascinating buildings in the country. However, the only special thing the third son could do was to hear colours, taste sounds and feel shapes. The world was a colourful, sounding whirlpool for him—and his father hated him for it. He misjudged the genius that lay dormant in him and despised the boy. He despised him so much that he finally disowned him.

“Since then, the boy has been wandering the world, restless, searching for something great, something that he will be remembered for all time—something that will show the whole world what the swirl of colours, shapes and sounds feels like... and what power this means. It will be so big and loud that even the father will have to hear it... and never forget his boy again.”

“Moving,” Jupiter said coolly. “Because of a strict father, will all those people in the projection room have to suffer today?”

“Story time is over,” Mr Flint interjected. “Lock them up!”

One of the Ryu brothers indicated a curt bow. “Be glad to!”

The boys, who had only been paying attention to Yamada and Flint, were startled to see that two of the brothers had stepped behind them. One of them was holding a gun. “Come on,

let's go!"

Flint's armed aide directed The Three Investigators out of the office and through a series of corridors. They ended up in the room where they had put Mr Van der Wijk's equipment earlier. This was the room behind the movie screen of the projection room. On one side, there was a flight of stairs winding down into more pitch darkness. One of the brothers pressed a switch, and there was a hum. Then fluorescent lights flickered on the ceiling.

"Get down there!" The Ryu brother in front directed the boys, one by one, down the narrow stairwell.

Reluctantly, they descended the steps. The second Ryu brother with the gun was three steps behind them. None of the boys dared to resist.

The stairs led down two floors, into the dark depths of Terror Castle. At the bottom, they found themselves in a long passageway. The air here smelled damp and musty. The ceiling was very low. As the tallest of The Three Investigators, Pete could just about walk upright.

"Wait!" One of the brothers came up and opened a rusty door that looked as if it had come straight from a centuries-old dungeon. "You will stay here until we come to fetch you for your private performance!"

It was dark there, but The Three Investigators knew what was behind the door—a dungeon cell with rusty ring-bolts attached to the walls. Jupe and Pete had been locked in here before.

However, when the three of them went in, Jupe and Pete realized that there were some changes there. Instead of a single large cell, there were now several jail cells with bars. However, the ring-bolts were still there on the wall.

The second brother pointed the gun at the nearest cell. "Go in there and don't get any ideas about making noise. Only the rats will hear you down here!"

The three of them had no choice but to obey. After that, the first brother closed the cell door and locked it with a padlock.

"I can't believe that I'm locked in here yet again," Pete whispered into the impenetrable darkness as the rusty door had slammed shut. "We didn't even bring our backpacks with the mobile phones. They're upstairs in the cloakroom."

"I doubt there's any reception here at all," Jupiter replied. Then he listened. Footsteps echoed in the stairwell. When everything was quiet, he said: "Pete, do you have your lock picks?"

"Yes," Pete replied, "but it would help if I have some light down here."

"I have a book of matches!" Bob rummaged in his trouser pockets. "Shall I light one?"

"Hold on!" Jupiter had scanned the stone wall at the back of the cell. "I think..."

"What?"

"Yes!" cried Jupiter triumphantly. "Here's a holder with a torch! Bob, give me the matches!"

Shortly afterwards, one of the small sticks flared up. However, Jupiter did not manage to light the torch immediately. The match went out before anything happened. He had no luck the second time either.

"Geez, Jupe," said Bob anxiously. "There are only three or four matchsticks left! If you can't get the next one..."

At that moment, the torch finally caught fire. It flared up and a reddish yellow glow illuminated the dungeon cell. The Three Investigators looked around. In one corner stood a three-legged stool that had already seen its best days. The other three sides of the cell were iron bars.

Jupiter carefully took the torch out of its holder and went to the cell door. “Get to work, Pete!” he instructed.

The Second Investigator dug his lock picks out of his trouser pocket. Then he reached out of the cell bars and grabbed the padlock. He selected the appropriate lock pick and set to work.

In the dim light from the torch, Bob looked out of their cell into the adjacent cells. He figured that there were at least two more cells alongside theirs.

Suddenly Bob flinched. Two cells away from them, something had moved!

16. Escape From the Dungeon

“There’s someone there!” Bob took a deep breath.

The First Investigator held up the torch. Now he could see that there was another person behind the bars two cells away.

It was the woman in the green evening dress.

“What are you doing here?” Jupe asked.

“I like to spend my free time in dark dungeons,” she said spitefully.

“Why did they lock you in?”

“I don’t see how that’s any of your business,” she replied, “but if you can get me out of here, I’d be very grateful.”

“We only help people who cooperate with us,” Jupiter said in a matter-of-fact manner.

“Cooperate with three guys who think they’re investigators?”

“You know about us?” asked Bob disappointedly. Apparently everyone in the castle really did know who The Three Investigators were.

“It’s my job to find things out,” the woman replied.

“But then you should also know that we don’t just think we are investigators, we are in fact investigators,” Jupiter said. “Our record of solved cases speaks for us.”

“That may be so,” the woman said, unimpressed, “but this matter is a bit too big for you!”

“You mean the fact that Yamada is going to terrify his audience with music tonight?” Just at that moment, a sombre chord sounded from far away.

“Here we go!” whispered Bob, aghast.

“*Phonophobia* is fortunately not the first piece,” Jupiter said. “It comes just before the break.”

“Still, we don’t have much time left!” The woman sounded nervous now.

“And all this just because this crazy conductor wants to take revenge on his father?” said Bob.

“That also seems strange to me in retrospect,” Jupiter said. “After all, his father had already died.”

“You are right,” the woman interjected. “However, the whole thing has far greater implications than family revenge.”

“Then tell us what you know!” demanded Jupiter. “We can only stop Yamada if we work together.”

“Knowledge will not get us out of this dungeon,” the woman replied.

“Done!” Pete called out. He removed the padlock and opened the cell door.

The Three Investigators got out of their cell. Pete then went ahead to open the rusty door. “Thank goodness they did not lock this door. Let’s go fellas!”

“Wait!” Jupe called out. “I want to have a word with our fellow prisoner.”

“Let me out!” the woman hissed. “If Yamada does his thing, it will end badly!”

The First Investigator walked to the woman’s cell followed by Bob. Pete stood guard at the rusty door.

“How about you tell us what you are doing here,” Jupe told the woman. “If you’re not on Yamada’s side, are you investigating him? For private reasons or on behalf of someone?”

“On behalf of...”

“That’s what I thought. You already said that it was your job to find things out.”

“Are you a journalist?” asked Bob.

The woman seemed to struggle with herself for a moment. Then she exhaled audibly. “All right, then. Open cards.” She lifted a bit of her dress and pulled out an ID card strapped to her thigh. “They took my gun, but I had this hidden under my dress with body tape.”

Jupe leaned forward. “Mary Peterson from the FBI.”

“FBI?” repeated Bob. “You’re an agent?”

She nodded.

“Okay then,” Jupe said. “Pete, we need your lock picks over here. Bob, can you take over from Pete?”

Jupe held the light for Pete to work on the padlock. The padlock was different from the one he had just picked, so he realized he might need more time to unlock it.

“Aren’t you working with a partner?” Jupe asked Mary.

“Normally, yes,” she said grimly, “but the FBI felt that the Yamada case was closed. This man is always underestimated, but nobody wants to believe me.”

“We’ll take your word for it.” Jupiter said.

“At least I managed to convince my boss to let me come here to the castle tonight.”

“What is Yamada up to now?”

“When he came to America a few years ago, he sought contact with a research unit at the Pentagon. He presented the results of his very special research to the people there—musical instruments as sonic weapons!”

“They must have been very impressed!” Jupe surmised.

“They did at first,” said Mary Peterson. “Yamada had developed a concept of how music and sounds could be used to manipulate individuals—to control their will and make them compliant.”

“Creepy!” Pete thought as he continued fiddling the padlock.

“It was. He presented a series of tests that were quite impressive, for example, an experiment in which a sound field influenced a person’s movement patterns.”

“Has the Pentagon signed any contracts with Yamada then?” Jupe asked.

“No. The experiments were still too immature and in part simply ineffective. Yamada asked for millions for further development, but the Pentagon was no longer interested. That humiliated Yamada severely.”

“No wonder,” Pete said. “First he was ignored by his father and then by Uncle Sam!”

“Someone with Yamada’s eagerness for recognition doesn’t digest such things easily,” Jupiter added.

“Right, and I’m afraid the people there weren’t very diplomatic back then.”

“So Yamada left without having achieved anything.”

“He became the new leader of The Colourphonics and at first seemed to only care about concerts. Sometime later, we found out that he tried to make contact with terrorist groups, but he failed there as well.”

“And when you heard about the planned concert, did you suspect that Yamada was plotting revenge?” Jupiter enquired.

“That’s right,” Mary Peterson confirmed. “Unfortunately, many of my colleagues think this suspicion is nonsense.”

“Even after there were strange occurrences during the rehearsals?”

“Because of headaches and dizziness, the FBI is not called in just yet,” the agent said.

“Well, from the guest list, there are people from the Department of Defence,” Jupiter said.

Mary Peterson laughed out. “They never said they would attend. Lady Eunice just didn’t dare tell Yamada about it. Such a sensitive person can’t cope with rejections.”

“You mean no Defence officials are here tonight?”

“That’s right,” Mary Peterson confirmed, “but Yamada doesn’t know that, and I bet he’s up to something bad!”

“I’ve got it!” Pete said as he removed the padlock and then opened the cell door for Mary Peterson to get out.

“Hey, fellas!” Bob called out from the rusty door. “I think this is the penultimate piece before *Phonophobia*... but I’m not quite sure.”

“If my theory is correct, he will be using amplifiers,” Mary said, “and mobile devices that he can control to get even closer to the targets.”

“Whatever he does, we have to stop him!” said Pete.

“In the process, though, we can’t let Flint and those dragon guys get in our way,” Bob added.

“We don’t take the way through Flint’s office,” Jupiter said as they hurried along the passageway. “Fortunately, we happen to know our way around this castle a bit. First we have to go back up.”

They hurried through the dark passageway and rushed up two flights of stairs. The sounds of the concert grew louder with each step.

Finally, they reached the room behind the movie screen. They could sense that the music filled the entire castle and created an unreal atmosphere. It almost seemed as if the long cobwebs on the sconces were blowing in time.

Bob went straight to the door and attempted to open it. “Locked,” he whispered in disappointment. “What about the main door of the projection room?”

“Right,” Jupe agreed. “Let’s go!”

“What do we do if we run into Flint or the dragons?” Pete wanted to know. “They won’t be listening to the concert after all, but will keep as safe a distance as possible from the music!”

“We just have to be careful!” Jupe replied.

“All right, once we get in there, please hold back!” admonished Mary Peterson. “I will take care of Yamada alone.”

Cautiously, they made their way out of the room and then hurried through a series of corridors. Pete looked around carefully. Mr Flint and the three dragon brothers could be anywhere.

“Look out!” hissed Jupiter as they turned a corner. “Someone’s there!”

17. Dangerous Levels

“Who’s that?” Mary Peterson whispered when she saw the tall man creeping around the corridor. He had an umbrella in his left hand, which he carried like a weapon, despite the dry weather. In his right hand, he held a can of pepper spray.

“Wait!” Then a smile spread across Pete’s face. “Why, it’s Worthington!”

“Worthington?” Mary Peterson wondered.

“Our friend,” said Jupiter, who realized that there was no time for detailed explanations.

When the English chauffeur saw the boys, he came straight up to them.

Mary Peterson, on the other hand, didn’t seem to want to wait to hear what the chauffeur had to report. “I’m going to the projection room now!” With that, she went off.

“She won’t get far,” Worthington said. “I just saw two men locking the main door to the projection room.”

“What are you doing in here anyway?” asked Bob.

“I am here tonight on business. After I parked the car, I remained in there. Then I saw you gentlemen outside on the terrace and witnessed you being led back in through the French window. Consequently, I decided to investigate the matter. In this castle, you have to be ready for anything!”

“Unbelievable!” Pete snapped. “You’ve come to help us again!”

“Very true, young sir.”

“Somehow in this place, I get this constant déjà-vu feeling!” Pete added.

“So Worthington, you saw someone lock the main door to the projection room?” Jupe wanted to confirm.

“Yes, but it struck me as most strange,” the chauffeur said.

“I guess that the emergency exit to the projection room is also locked,” Jupe surmised.

“So the only way to go in there is through the dining room,” Bob said.

“I found it equally strange that a gentleman sent all the staff away,” Worthington continued. “Only one red-haired girl is still there. She is sitting outside on the steps.”

Jupiter then told the chauffeur: “There is no mobile phone reception here in the castle, but it should work in the car park. Please call Inspector Cotta from there. He will take care of everything, and take the red-haired girl with you. She can explain to the police what this is all about!”

“Very well,” Worthington replied formally. Then he turned on his heel and hurried towards the exit.

Not a moment later, footsteps echoed along the corridor towards them. It was Mary Peterson. Her face looked red and heated. “The main door and the emergency exit of the projection room are both locked!”

“Don’t worry, we know another entrance,” Jupiter reassured her.

“We’re out of time!” Mary Peterson struggled to keep her voice under control. “The *Phonophobia* piece could start at any moment!”

Jupiter led the small group along a series of corridors to the dining room. There, he immediately opened the mirror door, and went into the secret passageway. The rest followed.

Coming into the projection room, he peered out from behind the velvet curtain. He spotted Aunt Mathilda and Uncle Titus in the audience. While his aunt listened spellbound, his uncle looked rather bored and was about to nod off. He promptly received a nasty look from his wife.

Two men with radios—presumably the bodyguards of the stars—stood at the main door and the emergency exit. Very likely, they didn't even know that the doors were already locked from the outside.

"Let me through!" Mary Peterson pushed past Jupiter. "And don't you go anywhere!" With these words, she disappeared.

At that moment, the piece of music also ended with a piercing gong.

When the applause had died away, Yamada turned to the audience and announced: "Ladies and gentlemen, for the next piece I will now move to the pipe organ. You will hear an original composition entitled *Phonophobia*!" Then Yamada disappeared from view.

Bob ventured forward a little to see better. The brocade curtain next to the pipe organ moved slightly. He wondered if Mary Peterson was waiting behind it. If so, why did she allow Yamada to take a seat at the pipe organ?

"Agent Peterson should finally intervene!" whispered Pete.

The first bars of *Phonophobia* started. The audience became strangely quiet. Even the elderly man in the dinner jacket next to Uncle Titus stared forward, spellbound.

Jupiter, on the other hand, looked down at his hands. In them he held the hazard meter he had built. The display showed a few yellow bars. It wouldn't be long before the first people in the audience started getting headaches and dizziness... and then the pipe organ would start. Jupiter did not want to imagine what would happen then.

Pete looked at the meter. "I want to get out of here!"

"In a minute! I think you'd better use the earplugs from now on!" Juve handed little yellow rubber plugs to his friends. Then he leaned forward and looked at the pipe organ. "What on earth is Agent Peterson doing?"

The curtain next to the pipe organ bulged. However, before Jupiter, Pete and Bob could think about it, the first members of the audience flinched. A woman whimpered. A man grabbed his head. Someone jumped up.

"Here we go!" shouted Bob, who now was no longer concerned about being quiet. His two friends, who were wearing their earplugs, did not hear him.

Jupiter looked at the hazard meter. The display was showing almost all the yellow bars.

"The world is roaring in colour!" Yamada shouted into a microphone as he raised his hands for a chord. His voice echoed through the loudspeakers so amplified that even with hearing protection one could hear every word. "A roaring sea of red screams! It rains the black flowers of death! Welcome to *Phonophobia*!"

Chaos broke out. People screamed. The first guests threw themselves against the doors but to no avail. Pete pressed the earplugs deeper into his ear canals and Jupiter realized that the display on his hazard meter was now showing red bars—indicating dangerous levels!

"Come!" Despite his stature, the First Investigator sprinted towards the pipe organ.

Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed several black boxes lowering from the ceiling on metal cables. They were more loudspeakers! The First Investigator was sure of that.

The devices hovered over the helpless audience like evil drones. The musicians were startled and had stopped playing. However, Mr Yamada was unfazed, and continued to hammer on the organ keys for his cruel work.

Jupiter felt his temples begin to throb. His steps became more feeble, and his head felt heavy. In any case, his earplugs could not help much. Clearly, the music began to have an

effect on him.

"The air blower!" Jupiter called dazedly to Bob.

Bob pulled out an earplug. "What?"

"The air blower!" Juve repeated. "The air for the pipe organ is provided by an air blower! If we pull the plug on the blower, the pipe organ has to stop!"

"Nothing doing!" One of the dragon brothers appeared in front of them as if from nowhere. Just then, Jupiter spotted another brother standing behind the curtain, just finished tying Mary Peterson's hands behind her back. The young woman could do nothing.

Both brothers wore ear protectors. It was of no concern to them that Yamada continued pounding on the keys as if he were the devil himself.

Jupiter thought his head might burst, but his mind was still working. He had to get past Yamada's assistants to the pipe organ!

Pete hurried through the dark passageway. He desperately wanted to get away from the music. Away to anywhere!

Only when he was far enough away from the projection room did he stop. He was a coward! His friends were in mortal danger in the projection room! And he had simply run away!

The realization was bitter. *Phonophobia* or not, he had to go back! But just as he was about to turn back, a completely new idea came to him. While setting up the day before, he had seen the fuse box for the projection room! It was in the dressing room. If he managed to flip out all the fuses, the loudspeakers and all the other electronically operated equipment in the projection room would go out!

Pete burst out through the mirror door and then ran straight to the dressing room with his heart pounding. When he entered the dressing room, there was someone there. It was Mr Flint. He glared angrily at the Second Investigator. Quick as a flash, the manager grabbed a carpet knife that lay on a table among other stagehand tools. "Don't take another step!"

Pete had to get past Flint—knife or no knife! Out of the corner of his eye, the Second Investigator saw an old-fashioned home organ standing there. He spun around, gave the instrument a shove with full force in the manager's direction. Luckily, the caster wheels on the home organ were working well, as it rolled forward and rammed into Flint, who then staggered back and fell into a corner. The carpet knife slipped from his hand and skidded away across the stone floor. The home organ toppled over completely, trapping Flint between itself and the wall.

Pete grabbed a broom and held it threateningly in Flint's direction. "You better not move or you'll have to deal with this demonic cleaning device!"

With his free left hand, he reached for the fuse box.

The dragon brother had built himself up threateningly in front of Jupiter. But before he could attack, the First Investigator reached out to the man's ears, pulled out his ear protector, and flung it far away.

Now the man himself was at the mercy of the sounds of *Phonophobia*. He staggered slightly and pressed his palms over his ears. Already Jupiter was at the back of the pipe organ. He grabbed a broom leaning against the wall and began to look for the appropriate place to hack.

Suddenly, someone grabbed the First Investigator by the shoulder. Then he felt a knee strike heavily on his back. He collapsed and let go of the broom. However, he would not give

up so easily as he attempted to reach for the broom again.

At the same time, the lights in the hall went out. The music from the loudspeakers fell silent. The pipe organ still resisted for a single, wicked chord, then the sound died away in a haunting wail.

The attacker let go of Jupiter. Apparently he had also been surprised by the darkness. Jupiter pulled the rubber plugs out of his ears—just in time to hear the splintering of wood. The panicked guests had managed to kick down one of the doors.

Dull light fell into the room, just enough to make out the outlines of the people. Then someone came straight at him with a flashlight. “Jupe?”

“Pete!”

It was indeed the Second Investigator. “I flipped the main switch! Flint tried to stop me. He’s in the dressing room now—tied up with tape!”

“Will you give me the flashlight?” asked Jupiter.

“Yeah, sure!” said Pete. “Bob is now releasing Mary Peterson. Also, Chloe and Worthington are back. They’re watching the door to make sure none of the dragon brothers escape! They’ve already got one of them.”

“Very good! Now let’s take care of our main character!”

Jupiter headed for Yamada. The conductor made no attempt to flee. In the yellow beam of the flashlight, he continued to play calmly on the pipe organ—although not a single sound was heard.

The First Investigator was taken aback to discover that Yamada—unlike his assistants—was not wearing headphones. He had deliberately exposed himself to the full force of the music. Blood dripped from his nose, but that did not seem to bother him. His slender fingers darted over the keys, which were getting speckles of red. His eyes were half-closed and he moved his upper body to music that only he could hear because it existed exclusively in his head.

“It’s over, Yamada!”

“*Phonophobia* is eternal. *Phonophobia* is bigger and stronger than everything.”

“*Phonophobia* is over,” the First Investigator said quietly.

“It’s never over.” Yamada swayed slightly, but his fingers continued playing on the keys undeterred.

“The concert is over.” Jupiter stepped right next to the man who was playing his soundless music as if in a trance. “Silence prevails once again!”

Only these last words got through to Yamada. His fingers paused and he wordlessly surrendered to Agent Mary Peterson, who had stepped up to the pipe organ to take him away.

18. The Press Reports

A few months later, Bob opened the folder in which he had filed the report on ‘The Mystery of the Symphony of Terror’. Next to the neatly cut newspaper articles, he placed a new report that had just appeared in the magazine *Inside Hollywood*.

Satisfied, he looked at the collection. The first thing he picked up was the article from the *Los Angeles Times*:

Attack With Sonic Weapons

Los Angeles, Friday—Seven visitors to a concert were slightly injured in a failed retaliatory attack by a developer of sonic weapons. The attack was aimed at the Department of Defence.

A concert by ‘The Colourphonics’ orchestra got out of hand on Friday evening at Terror Castle in Black Canyon. With the help of electronic musical instruments, as well as self-developed loudspeakers and amplifiers, conductor and composer Howard Yamada, 63, created complex combinations of sound vibrations which were incorporated into his orchestral composition.

The sound phenomena actually worked and there was mass panic in the audience. On record, eight people were slightly injured, including Yamada himself. The main symptoms of the victims were headaches, dizziness, and nose bleeds.

The sonic attack was aimed at officials of the Department of Defence who had been invited to the event. However, none of them were present, but Yamada only learned this after his arrest.

The exact background of Yamada’s attack is part of ongoing investigations. However, it is suspected that the leader of The Colourphonics has suffered from severe mental disorders since childhood. According to anonymous sources, Yamada had once submitted plans for sound-based weapon systems to the Department of Defence, but they were rejected after thorough examination. However, the Pentagon is currently refusing to comment.

Yamada’s accomplices, 33-year-old Robert J Flint and three other assistants, were also caught and are now in custody. Flint, who is heavily in debt, stated immediately after his arrest that Yamada had promised him a five-figure sum for his assistance.

The fact that Yamada’s plan failed and there was no permanent injury to the audience is thanks to three high school students from Rocky Beach who were able to stop the music through their courageous intervention. They were helped by an employee of a car rental company and a schoolgirl. When the police arrived, the situation was already under control.

Read more about sonic weapons in our special report on page 12.

A related article had also appeared in *Rocky Beach Today*:

“I Went Through Hell!”—Pensioner from Rocky Beach Survives Music Torture

“It was horrible!” Pensioner Birch Waughtown shivers when he thinks of the terrible events that lie behind him. His gaze keeps darting distraughtly over to a large aquarium with goldfish. They give Birch the support he has lost since an orchestral concert by The Colourphonics in Black Canyon. There, he and numerous famous Hollywood stars including Aphrodite Jacobs and Dave Nell, were tormented by the music of the orchestra.

Healthwise, everything is supposedly fine with him, but the psychological wounds run deep. Time and again, the man’s pulse rises above 150, and since that fateful evening, he has also suffered from nervous bed-wetting.

“I don’t really like that kind of music,” he says in a low, quivering voice. “There used to be real concerts in Hollywood, where the standard of the events was unsurpassed. If only I hadn’t gone to listen to those Colourphonies [sic]!”

It was a mistake that the pensioner bitterly regretted. He had to endure sixty minutes of musical torture. As if that wasn’t enough, there was finally a mass panic—“because the music was so bad!” as Birch explains.

Now the spry man from Rocky Beach wants to file a lawsuit against the musicians and the organizer. We wish him all the best!

Bob had to smile when he read the article from *Inside Hollywood* again:

The Sound of Anxiety

A balloon ride turns out to be a real odyssey, a lonely glass building poses riddles, and an orchestra with a dark secret causes fear and terror...

Phonophobia—The Symphony of Terror, the latest movie by director Raymondo Kappelhoff, promises an extra dose of weird suspense. It is about secrets, revenge and honour, in addition to hopes and dreams. This fairytale-like movie is accompanied by the eerie sounds of a Los Angeles orchestra, The Colourphonics.

The orchestra, which makes experimental music outside the mainstream, hit the headlines a few weeks before filming began when the former conductor and leader of the ensemble tried to use their music to carry out a sonic attack on officials of the Department of Defence.

Raymondo Kappelhoff, however, wanted the musicians’ cooperation in his movie. After the police investigation was completed, he immediately contacted Jim Shoomer, the new leader of The Colourphonics. Eventually, the ensemble did not only record the soundtrack for the movie, but also featured in some scenes.

“The Colourphonics give my movie an extra dimension—an eerie depth that evokes feelings of anxiety,” says Kappelhoff.

One thing is certain—the movie is not for the faint-hearted. However, lovers of the mystery genre can look forward to a stimulating evening at the cinema!